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WINDS of CHANGE

By

Margaret T. McClellan

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Winds of Change

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WINDS OF CHANGE

from

"Woodstock Now And Then"

by

MARGARET THOMPSON McCLELLAN

Pen Drawings by George Holt

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THE OBSERVER COMPANY
Putnam, Connecticut

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"for the wind passeth over it
and it is gone"

INTRODUCTION

This is a story of a New England town. The chapters have been taken from articles which were printed during the past year in the Windham County Observer. After a number of them had appeared a picture began to take shape and though it was a picture of Woodstock it could as well be a picture of any New England town which has been by-passed by progress.

Because it lies in the out-of-the-way northeast corner of Connecticut, Woodstock has not been "discovered." Life goes on here the year round in a natural and unselfconscious way.

The Common, with its stately homes and trees, the valley stretching to the east and the westward hills covered with orchards, is one of the loveliest in all New England. The surrounding countryside of little villages and comfortable dairy farms provide a firm economy and a serene way of life which is scarcely ruffled by the winds of change which comes in little gusts.

So many sounds have vanished from the life of these old New England towns: The singing of the spinning wheels and the swishing of the mill wheels; the whirring of the carriage wheels and the clack, clack, clack of hoofs; the screaming of the saw mills and the hammering of the fulling paddles; the sweet music of dulcimers and the day-long drone of sermons; the measured clang of the forge and the crackling of fires in big wood ranges. All these have gone, and in their place have come the modern sounds of cars and tractors and sprayers and radios. But these are not so strong that we cannot feel the quiet all around, nor hear the wind moving in the great trees, nor miss the counting of the hours by the sweet Academy bell.

Woodstock, Connecticut.
August, 1950.

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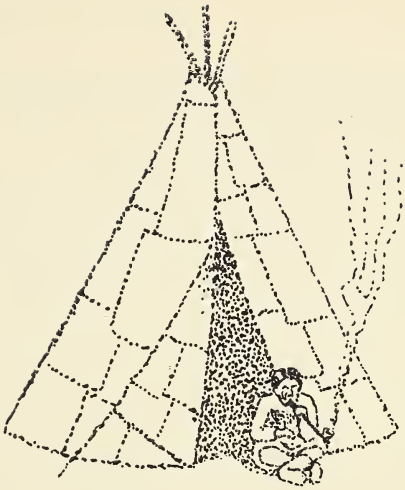
Mat Producing Country



WHEN the still, warm days come in the fall and the leaves drift quietly down opening up the woods, and when the corn stalks stand in sheaves in the fields, the ghosts of Indians are all around. Perhaps the feeling is a carry-over from pictures remembered from primary school when we learned how the moccasined feet moved soundlessly in the dry-leaved forests and how squaws ground corn into meal squatting on their haunches in the sun-dappled clearings, and how smoke from their pipes drifted up through the peaceful haze as they busied themselves with basket weaving.

Here, where I live, I have always felt their presence especially near and there is good reason as I have found in histories, for right here in these meadows and back up over the wooded hills nearby was a settlement of Wabbaquassets. When the first white settlers came they naturally chose this spot for their first buildings in Woodstock. The first structure they built they called Wabbaquasset Hall and it was right here where our house stands or just a few yards below. The soil was very rich and still is and gave great quantities of specially good corn and beans and there were innumerable springs for water. The marshes all around furnished reeds for mats and baskets and it was from these that the name Wabbaquasset came, for

187775

it means "mat producing country." The lazy and sometimes oppressive quiet of this spot must have suited the temperament of the Wabbaquassets for they were subject clans with little spirit or distinctive character.

Some of the neighboring Indians weren't so mild and timid. The Narragansetts and Nipmucks were constantly at each others' throats about possession of the territory east of the Quinebaug River. Near Killingly there is an Indian burying ground which was the result of one of their misunderstandings.

The story is that the Narragansetts who had territory on the seashore asked the Nipmucks down for a big shore dinner. The Nipmucks, or "Fresh Water Country" Indians, who were inlanders must have accepted with alacrity. The Narragansetts put on a big feast with all kinds of sea food in the most mouth-watering sauces. The Nipmucks ate till it came out of their ears, and, wanting to return the courtesy, asked the Narragansets up for a feast. Their menu consisted of eels with no fixings. The Narragansetts just sat and looked glum and grunted and didn't taste a bite. A few unpleasant remarks were exchanged which led to blows and a real fight. The Narragansetts were unarmed and only two managed to escape back home with news of the massacre. So back came a band of warriors after the Nipmucks' scalps. The battle raged back and forth across the Quinebaug for three days until the Narragansetts finally gave up and went home. The Nipmucks buried their dead on the battlefield, which ever after was known as Indian Burying Ground. Indians loved to tell this story to the early settlers.

Because of their flaccid natures the Wabbaquassets were pushed around quite a bit. First they were subject to the Nipmucks and then to the Pequots who had moved in from the Hudson River territory and then to Uncas the Mohegan to whom they paid yearly tribute of white deer skins, bear skins and black wolf skins. It is understandable then, how it was that they were such easy converts to Christianity when two Indians, Joseph and Sampson, came as Christian missionaries. Under their influence the tractible Wabbaquassets formed churches, cultivated their land instead of idling, kept the Sabbath and formed villages, the largest of which was the one in

Woodstock. Sampson lived here among them and under his oversight they built stately wigwams such as had never been seen before.

Other such "praying towns" sprang up all through the Nipmuck territory. John Eliot of Roxbury, Massachusetts, whose influence had brought all this about was so pleased when he heard of it that he set out on a trip to these parts. That was in 1674. When he arrived here he found a village of thirty families and one hundred and fifty souls. The sachem was away but his squaw invited Eliot and his party into the spacious wigwam which measured sixty feet by twenty, and fed them bountifully. Sampson and the other Indians gathered round and they all spent the night praying and singing psalms. The next day, September 16, Indians gathered from all around at the rock now known as John Eliot Rock, down the road behind our house. There they held the service that made the rock memorable and Major Gookin, the Magistrate who had come with Eliot, held a court establishing civil government among the Indians.

John Eliot returned to Roxbury greatly pleased with his work among these friendly Indians and confident "Light would shine into all the dark region around."

But the following summer the Narragansett war broke out and everything went to pieces. The praying Indians became savages again, the churches collapsed, and the villages were deserted. The Wabbaquassets fled from their fine wigwams and fields and went and threw themselves under the protection of Uncas at Mohegan. When the bloody war had ended the Nipmucks had been almost entirely annihilated. Thus the future Windham County was opened to English settlement.

The story of how the pioneers from Roxbury came to search out this "new and barbarous region" and chose Woodstock for the settlement, how thirteen men came on ahead and built Wabbaquasset Hall and made other preparations, of how the families followed into this desolate wilderness and divided the land among themselves in just and equal portions and set up a church and government is thrilling reading. The first town consisted of Plaine Hill, now Woodstock Hill, the Eastward

Vale, now South Woodstock, and the Westward Hill, the ridge that now contains the Joys' and our orchards.

The settlers enjoyed ten years of peace during which they got pretty well settled. And then back came the Wabbaquassets, disorderly and unfriendly; the war between France and England broke out; and Indians lined up with one side or the other. Woodstock was in a precarious position because her land was partly in Massachusetts and partly in Connecticut and the Wabbaquassets were willing to help Connecticut but not Massachusetts. The settlers had to watch their step carefully. They didn't dare to antagonize the Indians and yet they were constantly being annoyed by them.

One of the few Indians who was truly friendly was Acquittamaug. In 1630 at the time of the arrival of Winthrop's colony in Masssachusetts word somehow reached the Wabbaquassets that the colony was in great need of corn. These fertile hills were famous for their corn and Acquittamaug's father filled large sacks with it and, with his son and other Indians, carried them all the way to Boston. Ninety-three years later at the age of 112 Acquittamaug returned to Boston on a visit and was feted by the prominent citizens. When he died he was supposed to have been 114 years of age but the Indians said he was 123. This set a precedent for longevity in Woodstock.

For many years there was no peace or security for the settlers. Horrible stories of atrocities came to them from outside. The worst of these was in 1696. A certain John Johnson of Oxford was returning home from a visit in Woodstock. His wife and children were at home, the children playing about the room happily, when marauding Mohawks intercepted Johnson on his own doorstep and killed him and then broke into the house and dashed the heads of the three children against the chimney jamb. Mrs. Johnson's brother managed to drag her out of the house and down the banks of a river where they hid till dark and then made their way somehow to Woodstock where they awakened the settlers with their tale of horror. Panic broke loose. Some fled and returned to Roxbury. The ones who were left — men, women and children — took refuge in their fortifications.

It may have been at this time that the adventure of Bath-

shua occurred. The women shut up in the fort were getting tired of the meager diet and Bathshua offered to go and get vegetables from their gardens. She went and returned unharmed. Years later an old Indian came to her door begging for cider and offering a story in return. He told her that on that day when she left the fort he had watched her and had taken aim with his bow and arrow. Something kept his hand from shooting. He waited for her to return and took aim again, and again the Great Spirit held his arm. He said that ever after that he had thought of her as under the care of the Indians' god.

Then there is this story told by a child of the first settler near Hatchet Hill and taken from Clarence Bowen's History:

"She said that when she was a little girl her father built a log cabin near the hill, cleared some land, and then brought his family, consisting of a wife and three small children, to live there. They were very poor and the children had no shoes to wear. In the early winter they ran out of provisions and had only a little corn meal left. Her father took a bag of corn on his back and went to the nearest mill (quite a number of miles away), to get it ground. A heavy storm (snow storm) came on a few hours after he left home so that he did not get back for three days. Just after dark three Indians came to the cabin and asked for something to eat. Her mother daring not to refuse, took all the remaining meal and made them a Johnny-cake. The Indians ate it and then lay down before the fireplace.

"The mother took the three children onto a bed at the other end of the one-room cabin and anxiously guarded them until morning. When it became light one of the Indians motioned for one of the children to come to him. After some hesitation the child came. The Indian then took a roll of buckskin from his girdle and proceeded to make the child a pair of moccasins for her naked feet. He then did the same for the other children, and the three Indians then arose and quietly departed. Late in the afternoon of the same day one of the Indians returned and deposited a dried haunch of venison within the door without saying a word. The next day he came and left a small leather pouch of dried corn.

"The father reached home on the third day, and was, of

course, very thankful for the assistance rendered by the Indians to his family, for whom he had been very anxious during his enforced absence. A very strong bond of friendship was established between his family and the Indians of that locality, which was never broken as long as any Indian remained. The family knew of the exact locality of the last Indian chief, but would not reveal it, having sworn not to do so and the secret died."

What finally became of the Indians is hard to decide. They seem to have gradually wasted away because of the continued use of rum and cider. They especially liked cider and one Indian said he wished Mashmoquet Brook were all cider and then he'd lie down and let it run right through him. The whole question of the demoralization of the Indians ends in the old riddle of which came first, the chicken or the egg.

As I said, I get thinking about the Indians in the Fall and it makes me feel sad.

The Village Meeting Houses

LET US suppose that we are painting a picture of an old New England town. There will be rolling meadows with cows fenced in and through the meadows from wooded hills will flow a brook. There will be tree-lined roads and white farmhouses with red barns beside them. The village center will be a cluster of white houses, clapboarded and green shuttered and shadowed by weeping elms. And towering above the houses and the elms will be the white church steeple, the focal point of the picture. We have put it there instinctively for we know without conscious thought that the church is the focal point of the life of a New England town. It is the coming together place for common worship and companionship—a Meeting House in the true sense of the word.

Like a fine tree, the spire so straight and sure against the sky bespeaks a strong root system which goes deep through history to the earliest times of settlement.

The "Goers," as the first thirteen who came to settle Woodstock were called, turned their first thoughts to the laying out

of roads, choosing a lot for the minister and selecting a place for the Meeting House.

Wabbaquasset Hall which they built on the Old Hall Road as a base of supplies was used as the place of public meeting but during the first months while the weather was good Pulpit Rock was the place of worship. So it may rightly be called the first church of Woodstock.

By the time two years had passed the Goers and others who had come to join them had apportioned lots and built themselves shelters and were able to undertake the building of the first Meeting House. The site was in the middle of the tract of land called Plaine Hill, now Woodstock Hill, about forty rods south of where the present church stands. It was a crude log cabin type of building which soon could not hold the congregation which came from far and near.

In 1717 another larger house was built on the present site, the expense so impoverishing the parishioners that Woodstock was compelled to reduce her schools to a minimum and withhold the salary of the pastor, Mr. Dwight.

Clarence Bowen in his history says that it looked like a barn. "It had a west door and a south door but no steeple. The square pews had seats on three sides and high backs with lattice work through which the children could look. The pulpit was high and small, not much larger than a hogshead, in the middle of which the minister stood. Over the pulpit was a large sounding board which the children thought might someday fall and kill the minister."

Going to church in those days was no picnic. Nowadays people have difficulty in sparing one hour for church but before and within the memory of residents of Woodstock, Church was a Sunday-long affair, with time out for dinner. Mothers had to be sure to take along cookies to quiet the children. The deacons and old men stood through the long prayer which sometimes lasted an hour. And the sermons were full length volumes, not Readers Digest editions.

One pastor of the Muddy Brook parish, Rev. Mr. Backus, had a trick of announcing to his congregation sometimes that he had prepared a sermon but would "expound a chapter." "When

he expounded he was always a half an hour longer than when he read his sermon. This was so noticeable that those who stayed at home could always tell when he preached and when he did not, as they called it. They said they would not have found fault about this if he would only tell them beforehand so that they could calculate for dinner. But as they were ignorant of this they put the pudding in at a given time and if he happened to have no sermon that day it was all spoiled being boiled to pieces. This really broke him up for though they were a sleepy people they were more wakeful than their minister."

Church was a good place to catch up on sleep and pastors were always complaining about this. In the old East Woodstock Meeting House the pews had tables in front of the pews on which to place the prayer books. These were very convenient as head rests for naps.

Church was also a good place to catch cold. Until the 1830's there were no stoves in the Hill church. The only heat was from warming pans which the parishioners brought with them. Think of the red noses and the toes swollen with chilblains.

As far back as the oldest residents can remember, hymns, as we know them, have been sung with an organ and a choir providing the music. Before that and for special occasions later an ophicleide, which was a sort of trumpet, a bass viol and a violin were used. The old bass viol is still in the Hill church and John May has the ophicleide which was used in the East Woodstock church. At one time lap organs were used and in the earliest days psalms were sung without accompaniment. There was much wrangling as to how they should be sung for people had their own ideas about what the tune should be and would slide up and down at will. Church must have sounded like a barnyard on some Sundays.

Once the psalm tuner of the First Society asked for a choir loft where six pews could be sequestered for those "favored with agreeable voices," but the congregation protested and the plan was dropped.

Despite efforts at saintliness the early New Englanders were frequently quarreling among themselves, especially about their religion and meeting houses. Woodstock was certainly

not blameless in this respect. During the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Abel Stiles in the early 1700's, a quarrel broke out which divided the church permanently and which may be said to be the roots of the strong sectional feeling which has existed in the town even to this day. The dispute was over the question of the Saybrook Platform of Church Government and the Cambridge Platform, problems which seem very remote now but which were of vital importance to the settlers. The outcome was that one faction broke away and formed a church at Muddy Brook, now East Woodstock and Rev. Stiles went with them.

Those who had broken away continued to quarrel among themselves until a third faction separated and started their own church in North Woodstock. This, as much as the geographic size or the later industrial development, accounts for divisions which remain characteristic of the town.

A visitor to the town stopped in North Woodstock to ask if this was Woodstock. "No," was the reply, "this is North Woodstock." "Well," asked the visitor, "does this road lead to Woodstock?" "No," was the reply again, "it leads to South Woodstock." "And where does that road go?" asked the visitor. "Oh, that goes to West Woodstock." "And where is Woodstock?" "Well, you're **in** Woodstock," was the baffling reply. The visitor gave up in despair.

Rev. W. M. Cornell, in his "Recollections of Ye Old Time," tells of his first impressions of Woodstock when he came to be pastor at Muddy Brook. After the first meeting at which "the congregation was immense, filling the whole house, galleries, aisles and stairs," he asked, "How is this? You seem to be rich, and good livers, and have a large congregation. How does it happen that you have such an old dilapidated meeting house?" "Oh," was the reply, "you do not know our history. We have been fighting seventy years about that meeting house. Seventy years ago when the house was raised (it not being in the center of the parish) when one party raised the timber, the other appeared to push it down; and from that day to this, the quarrel has existed; and now one part of the parish are building a new house at Village Corners (North Woodstock). This is the reason we have not had a better house of worship."

"On the point of the location of the meeting house the parishioners were sworn contestants and they brought up their children on each side of the brook with instructions, 'Samuel, you fight for the removal of that meeting house,' and 'John, never suffer that house to be removed from its old location'."

And so the parish was divided into North and East and has remained so to this day.

The present church in East Woodstock was built in 1832 just ten years later than the Hill church and is a good example of the style of that period. Unfortunately the steeple was blown off in the hurricane of 1938 and so much damage was done to the church that the parishioners were unable to restore it.

Rev. Mr. Lyman was pastor at the time the present Hill church was built. During the fifty years of his pastorate he never missed a sermon. He used to pass up the aisle dressed in short breeches, large silver buckles on his knees and shoes, his venerable form and solemn countenance very impressive. He was as solemn as the judgment and no one could remember his ever smiling. Father Underwood was pastor at the West Woodstock church at the same time. He was a very different man from Mr. Lyman, musical, social, jovial. It was said that while the Muddy Brook parish was without a minister, Mr. Lyman was invited to attend all funerals and Mr. Underwood all the weddings.

Woodstock Hill is fortunate that its lovely little white church has survived, almost unspoiled by disaster or human folly. True, the original steeple, copied from a design by Christopher Wren, was blown down in the hurricane. But the present one by Cram and Ferguson is graceful and in perfect keeping with the period of architecture which produced such exquisite churches throughout New England in the early 1800's. Shortly after the church was built in 1821 at the fantastic cost of $3,164.59, "the heavy hand of classic formalism" committed sins of architecture which were only surpassed later at the turn of the century by the atrocities of that period. In 1858 the church was modernized and again at about 1900. Fortunately the clean, simple lines of the exterior remain and only the interior was made over to the brown gravy and stained glass

window taste. Now the pendulum has swung back and there is hope that the church may be restored to its original beauty.

At about the time of the building of the East and Hill churches a great religious revival swept the country hitting Connecticut especially hard. Protracted meetings, as they were called, were held for four days with two sermons each day and one each evening. Through these meetings many hundreds of new members were brought into the church. But at the same time there was much disagreement over doctrine and many broke away to form Baptist, Advent, Methodist and Universalist churches, all of which were represented in the various sections of Woodstock for some time afterward. The only one which has survived is the Second Baptist Church in South Woodstock.

The Swedish Evangelical Mission Church and the North and West Congregational churches all bear the stamp of the period when the squat, gabled buildings with the short steeple in one corner had come into vogue.

There was a time not too long ago when the churches of the town took turns playing host to all the others and wonderful meetings were held, with the churches packed and resounding with singing. After all these many years the parishioners had discovered that their differences were not as important as their likenesses.

Such meetings did not continue but the characteristic New England habit of centering the life of the village around the church remains as strong today as when the town was first settled.

The Ten Cord Sled

KEEPING the minister supplied with the necessities or enough money to buy them has always been a major concern of the parishes. In the old days the parson's salary was often paid in land or provisions in lieu of money. In this connection there is an amusing story which was printed many years ago in the Youth's Companion and found in an old scrap book belonging to Mrs. Louise Child.

"Probably the largest woodsled ever built in Windham County was one devised by Squire McClellan.

"For a number of years it was one of the local curiosities of the town of Woodstock. The narrator's father, who saw it frequently when a boy, says it was nigh thirty-two feet in length by three in breadth. The beams were of squared eight inch timber, with studs to match and the shoes or runners were over a foot in width.

"The story of its origin is as follows:

"In the parish where Squire McClellan resided, it was the custom, every winter, for each of the men who had wood-lots to give the parson a cord of hickory wood, and thus make up to him a winter's supply of fuel. The Squire, in particular, was al-

ways punctual in December with his cord of nicely prepared hickory.

"In that parish there was a man who had the reputation of being snug, niggardly and apt to shirk his due share of the burden of paying the minister. Indeed, his remissness in this matter had been a standing grievance in the place for many years.

"One autumn there was a revival of religious interest in the place and many members of the church were stimulated to earnest labor, and to live more strictly. Among these was the penurious man above alluded to whom we may conveniently designate as Brother Z—.

"Not a little to the astonishment of his neighbors, who had the ample experience of his miserly dealing, he arose in the prayer meeting one night, and exhorted to liberal giving, not only to the parson, but to all benevolent objects. Waxing exceedingly earnest in language and tone he declared, among other things, that he would that winter give the minister a load of wood. 'Yea, brethren,' he exclaimed, 'the Lord has opened my heart! I will give him a load of wood, and a big one. I will give him the biggest load you can draw from my woods to his yard!'

"This unexpected outburst from so drouthy a source was the parish wonder for a week. Many thought that Brother Z—. must be near his end.

" 'Truly,' said Squire McClellan, at the deacons' meeting, 'The Lord must have opened Brother Z—'s heart; but,' he added, with characteristic Scotch shrewdness, 'it may close soon and it may never open again. It behooves us in the parson's interest, to avail ourselves of it. Let us build a sled that will carry ten cords—and do it at once.'

"So thought the others. The monster sled was privately but expeditiously framed in a back yard, and early one snowy morning in December Brother Z— was amazed to see drive to his door apparently all the ox-teams in town, drawing the titanic sled, accompanied by a shouting throng of teamsters and all the small boys in the parish.

"The Squire was riding on the sled.

" 'We've come for the parsons load of wood, Brother Z—!', he

called out. 'You bade us haul the biggest load we could, and I am glad to hear that you have lately had a fine lot of hickory chopped.'

"Brother Z—, however, seeing the magnitude of the sled, tried to explain and demure, but in vain. The crowd roared him into acquiescence and with wry face he finally led the way across the snowy fields to his freshly corded tier of hickory in the lot.

"It is said that fully ten cords of wood were loaded upon the big sled under the Squire's supervision, and then to the tune of a most vociferous gee-hawing, the enormous load was successfully sledded to the parson's dooryard.

"The worthy minister, equally amazed, but more agreeably so, issued forth to learn the cause of the uproar.

" 'Good people, good people,' he cried, rubbing his hands, 'what meaneth this? Have the windows of heaven opened?'

" 'Nay, nay, parson!' exclaimed the Squire, 'but the Lord has opened Brother Z—'s heart and that so great a gift could have issued from so small a receptacle is one of the wonders of saving grace. Question it not, but take, and keep ye warm.'

"The minister had roaring fires that winter, but it was long before Brother Z— recovered his equanimity."

Fruit In Its Season

WHEN the dog days are gone and extra blankets are brought from the closets at night then crisp days and frosty nights put a rich bloom on the apples. Then the trucks begin to roll to storage piled high with boxes filled with fruit and huge vans come the other way bringing bright boxes for the growers. Then through the quiet orchards is heard the rustling of leaves as pickers reach through the branches for the round red apples and drop them gently with a low soft rumble into the bushel boxes. Then apple stands appear along route 93 through Woodstock and Sunday drivers pull along side to load up with Macs, or, if they know their apple names, with Cortlands, Wealthies and Red Romes.

It used to be that every farmer had his own small orchard and getting the apples in was as much a part of the year's cycle as haying or getting the wood down. Every farmer, and every townsman too, had barrels of apples in the cellar. That was before central heating came in, when cellars were not too hot for storing. Then the apples settled in the barrels, ripening to that mellow stage when it was good to go down cellar and smell the heady wine-like smell and fill the bowl for the evening munching.

That was before the bugs took over and all but the most determined farmers were forced to let their orchards fall into

neglect. Gradually, because of the bugs, apple growing became a business and an art and young ambitious men planted whole hillsides with neat geometric rows of sapling trees. They pruned and tended and mulched them through the eight or ten long years of waiting until the trees bore fruit. And then they began the battle of the bugs and the age-long struggle of man to understand and accept nature's coquettish ways.

The wonder is that there are any apples at all. The battle begins in the winter and lasts all year. When the temperature is just right so that the whole countryside is a dazzling fairyland of sprakling ice and cameras are clicking all over town, the fruit grower groans with apprehension as the ice thickens on the trees and bends the branches to the snapping point. Then sometimes just when the pruning must be done the snow piles three feet deep so that it is impossible to get into the orchards, much less prune. The orchardist is frustrated because he must wait another year before he may open up and shape his trees for strong and lasting growth of limbs and fruit.

Then, when the winter is past and gone and the warm spring rains begin, the sound of the sprayer is heard in the land, robbing the neighbors of sleep and wearing the growers ragged with worry and work. What is the weather report today? "A mass of high pressure dominates the weather map and will remain static off the Atlantic coast for twenty-four to forty-eight hours. From this we are able confidently to predict that there will be no rain for the next two days." So the grower puts away his sprayer and plans to relax. Whereupon black clouds appear in the sky and the rain comes down steadily for two days making the scab spores shoot and the grower go crazy as he visualizes apples covered with scab and unsalable in the fall.

When the rain finally stops he goes out and tries frantically to repair the damage by spraying for thirty-six hours without stopping. All through the day and the lonely night he sprays until his eyes are sunken in their sockets and he is so dizzy with fatigue that he falls asleep and wakens, to find himself lost in his own orchard.

Then his excellent up-to-date sprayer with the spray gun

which sends out a mist so fine it is like soft silk to the touch gets temperamental and stops and the good-natured genius at the garage must be called to come and put things right with his magic fingers. Sometimes to break the quiet and loneliness the grower sings ribald songs and the neighbors are startled to hear the sounds mingled with the roar of the sprayers. Sometimes the headlights flashed on the spray make such rainbow colors that cars passing on the highway stop to watch and hold up traffic.

The scab, the red mite, the maggot and the rosy aphis conspire until August to keep the grower in constant battle until it seems as though it will not be the atomic bomb which will put an end to us but the bugs.

In the spring, when orchards are all dressed up in pink and white and a side hill of young trees looks like a ballet chorus and bees are busy pollinating the blossoms, frost sometimes comes creeping like a cold eyed cat across the hills and valleys and nips the tender buds. Then whole crops are wiped out or at best there will be only hundreds of bushels where there should have been thousands. Or, instead of warm sunny days there will be gloomy persistent rains discouraging the bees from working and then the apples do not set.

Perhaps when the little apples have just formed from the spurs or later when the fruit is large and gives promise of a big, clean crop a summer storm will come and with it a sudden drop in temperature. Then hail cuts through the orchards like a machine gun riddling every precious apple with hideous marks and leaving scars which deepen as the apples grow. Against this there is no defense.

Sometimes the rains refuse to fall and then if the grower is unlucky enough to have dry soil he must haul thousands of tanks of water to water the hundreds of trees. And the apples he has counted in the thousands of hand-picked bushels dwindle as they drop in spite of the hopeful applications of hormone spray to stick them on.

And then when all these trials have been sustained and what fruit there is has become beautiful on the trees and the picking time is near the radio blares out "The tropical storm

which has been moving up the Atlantic coast is now situated dangerously near New England and is moving at the rate of 100 miles an hour. Listeners are advised to keep tuned to this station for reports. The center is expected to pass through Putnam sometime tomorrow night." The next day every available picker experienced or not is mustered out and friends come to help. The rains begin to drench the cheerful helpers but they make jokes about it and keep working. Fruit spurs which will make next year's crop are ripped off with the apples and fingers make bruises in their haste. But by the end of the day 500 bushels have been picked and leveled and hauled to storage. During the night the hurricane hits but the early morning light reveals that only the old apple tree in the back yard has been blown down.

Sometimes there is not such good fortune, as in the "memorable tornado of August 23, 1786 (which) damaged 20 houses and 60 barns and destroyed 2478 apples trees" in Woodstock or the hurricane of 1938 which knocked down practically all the orchard trees. Growers went out and pulled them back up again and anchored them with wires and have brought them through many years of struggle.

When the loads of apples roll down to the storage, and the apple pies come from the ovens hot and steaming and sweet with cinnamon, and the tang of cider bites the tongue, all these pleasures seem so natural to the season that it is hard to remember that apples don't just grow.

A Bird In The Hand

WHEN the first faint light begins to creep across the sky one autumn morning young men roll out of bed, fumble into their hunting clothes, brew themselves some coffee, and gulp it down, stuff some lunch into the capacious pockets of their hunting jackets, grab their guns, call their dogs and start off for the woods. Later a sharp high bark of a dog and the crack of a gun announces the opening of the hunting season.

The preparations for the great day will have been going on among the young men for weeks. There are two schools of thought about hunting gear: those who go in for flashy new outfits and those who consider it bad luck to wear anything but the old duds they have had for years. But about guns there is only one thought—your own gun was the cause of your bad luck last year and someone else's will be better. So there is an annual swapping, with all guns changing hands. This is a fine way to unload a gun that isn't much good. Then there is the matter of shopping around for ammunition. Some believe in brush load and some in high velocity shells. The pros and cons of that will keep men talking for hours.

Hunters nowadays complain that the sport isn't what it used to be and it is easy to see their point. Whole flocks of pheasants put out in the pastures and orchards amble along

the country roads so unconcernedly that cars have to slow down and wait for them to scatter. They are so tame that you could almost reach out your hands and grab them. It's a temptation to sit on your back porch in a rocker and take pot shots at a few for supper. The reason for all this as everyone must know, is that the birds are not wild but are stocked by the State every year. The ones that are let out in the fall are so lazy that they won't flush and that's not much fun for the hunters. They say it's like shooting tin cans off a stone wall. The redeeming feature in Woodstock is that the areas are exceptionally good cover because of the low second growth which is difficult to penetrate, and the many marshes where the dogs lose the scent and the hunters don't like to follow.

There was a time in Woodstock back around 1700 when birds were such a menace to the crops that it was voted that every man was to bring in a certain number of heads to the treasury or be fined for everyone short of that number. And before that birds of prey were so numerous that the town offered a reward of six pence a dozen for birds' heads. In 1871 George C. Chandler of Woodstock Valley shot a blue crane standing four feet seven inches high and measuring six feet across the wings. Cyril Paine of North Woodstock shot a black gyrfalcon which was eating full grown hens in the Stackpole dooryard. This was about 1915 and said to be the only record in Connecticut of this rare bird.

Of course in the early days there were all kinds of wild animals besides birds bothering the settlers. Wild cats were such a nuisance that a bounty of twelve shillings was paid for each one shot. Some still survive out West Woodstock way. Two years ago Arthur Elliot killed one weighing 32 pounds. The settlers literally had to keep the wolf from the door and beware of the big brown bear. A bill sent with a load of skins to Boston in James Corbin's cart will give some idea of the abundance of game in those times: 900 deer skins, 300 beaver skins, 30 bear skins, 20 fox and 4 wallenegs, 81 raccoon skins, 19 cats, 9 minx, 12 musquash or muskrats, 4 marten and 4 wolf skins.

It was not always realized what a part deer played in the survival of the early settlers, providing them with both food

and clothing. Nowadays they serve no apparent purpose either in maintaining the balance of nature or serving man. In fact they can be quite a nuisance to farmers and orchardists. But people are very sentimental about them because of their beauty and laws against shooting them are strictly enforced, except for farmers who may get permits to shoot them on their own land. The game wardens tell the story about the woman who called them one day demanding that they come immediately and get the men who were shooting out back of her place. The wardens were pretty certain that it was deer the men were after but when they had searched the woods all they found was a big patch of blood in the scuffed up snow and a note which read "Guess who."

Apart from the pheasants there isn't much to hunt nowadays. Woodcock are migratory and protected by Federal law. There are only two weeks of the season when they may be shot and if their migration does not happen to fall in the open season hunters are out of luck. Quail hunting is forbidden in the Windham area because of the scarcity. They have a habit of burrowing into the snow. During a recent severe winter after an unusually deep fall of snow there was an ice storm which covered the snow with a tight casing and the quail could not make their way out and died. At one time Mexican quail were brought in for stocking. In the process of adjusting to the Mexican environment their livers had become so small that they could not store vitamin D which they did not need because of the warm climate there. When they were exposed to our long winters they died because of this deficiency. Our native quail have large livers which enable them to survive several days without food and which store enough vitamin D to bring them through the winters nicely. But they bred with some of the Mexican stock and their offspring inherited the small livers. They are gradually balancing the adjustment but have not come back in sufficient numbers to be hunted.

Some time ago a resident stocked the Woodstock areas very heavily with pheasants. This was about the time that people around here started raising chickens commercially. The pheasants were so numerous that they were feeding in the runs

along with the chickens and got coccidiosis, a disease of chickens and were completely wiped out.

About ten years ago a boys' 4-H Conservation Club of Woodstock began putting feeding stations out in the woods in an attempt to conserve the wild bird life. Hearing that the State wanted to let out pheasants in Woodstock they undertook to develop a public shooting area. Those boys spent the whole winter going from farmer to farmer selling the idea and getting written permission for the lands to be used. They succeeded in gaining the interest and cooperation of enough land owners to create a public area. Since then the State has added to it so that now there are 10,000 acres of public hunting land in Woodstock, known as the Windham County 4-H Conservation Club. Men come from all around and as far away as Hartford and New Britain. It is estimated by Armstrong's, Trask's, Danielson's and Barrett's stores, where permits must be obtained daily, that about two hundred hunters come during an average season.

Growing birds for the State to let out has become quite a business. During an average hunting season 4,000 birds are let out in the Windham area alone. Most breeders start their chicks and, when they are grown, bids are taken, the lowest bidder establishing the price and getting the business first. Hitherto mostly cocks were bought by the State, but, through the pressure of breeders who often were left with large numbers of hens on their hands, hens were bought with the cocks this year and the season was open for both hens and cocks for the first time.

The birds are banded and numbered according to areas and hunters are required to turn in the bands of the birds they shoot. In this way the State supposedly can keep track of where the stocks are depleted. In actuality this does not work very well, for the hunters either forget or neglect to turn in the bands. Only about twenty percent of the bands are ever returned. It is estimated that about a third of the birds let out each year are shot. Of the ones remaining most are prey to wild animals or do not winter over.

In the last few years the Woodstock area has showed up

best in the State in the number of birds shot. Whether or not this indicates superior marksmanship on the part of our men is a moot question.

There are a few good rules for cooking pheasant which wives would be wise to remember when their proud husbands come home with a brace of birds. First, use lots of fat; second, cook them quickly with lots of heat (usually about 45 minutes is enough); and third, serve them immediately. If they are old birds they will need to be cooked in a casserole.

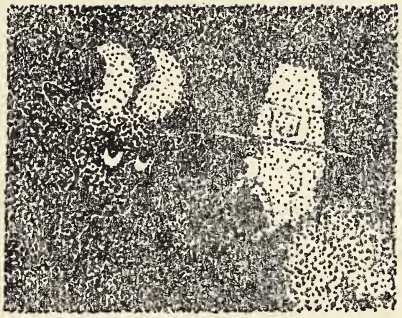
Here is a recipe that will warm the cockles on a brisk fall day: Disjoint the bird as for a fryer. Place it in an uncovered baking dish with a thin strip of salt pork on each section. Brown it at 375° and then pour over it a sauce made of 1 tablespoon chili powder, 1 tablespoon salt, 1 tablespoon celery seed, ¼ cup brown sugar, 1 teaspoon paprika, ½ cup vinegar and 1 can puree tomato. Reduce the heat and baste occasionally with the sauce being careful not to let the dish dry out and adding water only if necessary.

For plain roasting I quote Louis Diat's "French Cooking For Americans."

"When a pheasant is young and tender, it can be roasted just like a chicken, remembering, however, that it is a dry bird and so requires extra fat in the cooking.

"It should always have salt pork tied around it and plenty of good fat spread over it also and should be basted with the fat all the time it is cooking. It is most important that a roast pheasant be served the minute it is done because it doesn't hold well. Let the guests wait for the pheasants but never let the pheasant wait for the guests."

And I might add to hunters: Let your wives wait while you hunt, till the last ray of light if necessary, for this is your one chance in the year, in these days of women's rights, to get that good old-time feeling that it is a man's world after all.



A Tale Of Witchcraft

THIS story, author unknown, was found in Mrs. Louise Child's scrapbook: Many years ago, when almost every person in New England was a believer in that nonsensical bubble, witchcraft—when old women, if they happened to be ill favored, were sure of a ducking in some convenient horse pond, some serious scares were enacted and some that very much favored the ludicrous.

In the old town of Woodstock, a town at that period famous for witches, there lived a sturdy old farmer by the name of Abijah Lyon. He was called Deacon Lyon, for he was a deacon of the church. The minister was Rev. Mr. Styles; and, as Mr. Styles is destined to take a prominent part in my story, I might as well describe him before I proceed any further. He was a little, dried-up, weazen-faced old gentleman of seventy, who carried about the enormous weight of 75 pounds. It was said in his younger days he weighed 120 pounds. Mr. Styles was a great witch hunter, and a terror to all the fraternity who dealt in that business. He had often been called out of bed, after the dead hour of midnight, to lay the devil; and up to the time of my story had always been successful. He wore a great gown or cloak on his nightly excursions, and when thus clad he looked formidable.

We are now to go back to Deacon Lyon. He was a sturdy

old farmer who stood 6 and ½ feet in his boots, and owned the best farm in town. The deacon had a family of six stalwart boys, and several blooming daughters. The day before Thanksgiving came around (that old, time honored festival of New England and the greatest holiday in all that region, when every farmer expected all his relations to dine with him down to the fortieth cousin), Deacon Lyon said to his boys, "Work with a will, get all the garden stuff into the cellar, and we will all go as soon as it is done to your grandfather's, and tomorrow, after dinner we will come home, and you may have a party in the parlor, and invite all the young folks in the place."

The boys worked right smart, and long before night the cellar was well filled with garden vegetables, and the family on their way to see the deacon's father, who lived about four miles off. But in their hurry they forgot to shut the outside cellar door called the hatchway. Now the deacon had a big old black sheep that had nearly a bushel of horns on his head, and he went round the premises where he had a mind to go. He was cross, and if anyone made a motion like a challenge, he would butt him over. He found the open door and walked in without knocking, and regaled himself on the good things stored there. A neighbor passing by shut the door and shut in the old sheep. I suppose all know that black sheep's eyes in the dark look like balls of fire, and magnify to twice their ordinary size. The deacon and his family arrived safe home before night and the old parlor long before dark was all fitted for the coming party.

At an early hour the young folks assembled. The kitchen door was left partly open in order that the deacon's wife could peep in now and then and see that all the plays were conducted with propriety. The fun grew fast and furious till about eight o'clock, when the deacon told his son Abijah, his oldest and namesake, to go down cellar and get some apples and cider. The young lad started on his mission, but came back in great haste, every hair on his head standing erect.

"What is the matter?" asked the deacon.

"Oh, father, the devil is in the cellar. Oh, such eyes and horns!"

"Give me the pitcher," said the deacon; "you always was a coward."

The old deacon was brave. He started downstairs, but not to the bottom did he get before he was on the road back, making hasty strides for the old kitchen.

"It is true, my young friends, the devil has at last come to make Deacon Lyon a visit. Abijah, go after Mr. Styles as fast as you can go."

The young man obeyed. Mr. Styles was up, and soon ready to go to the deacon's; and that he might appear formidable, he put on the great cloak that the ladies had given to their beloved minister. When Mr. Styles arrived at the house of the deacon, the first thing that was proposed was a season of prayer. Very proper was that for the devil is afraid of a praying man, so I have always been taught.

When time of devotion was through the little priest, with his prayer book under his arm, started for the cellar. Close behind him marched the deacon and his sturdy sons, while the rear was brought up by the weaker and less resolute part of the party. On descending the stairs a fearful sight met their view; and awful pair of blood red eyes glared on the priest and his followers, and from the tremendous size of his horns he could not have been a young devil, but Lucifer himself, who is supposed to be the king of the infernal regions. It was a moment of awful uncertainty; had the priest power to lay him, or would the devil rush upon him and tear him to pieces in a moment?

When the broad stair at the bottom was reached, the priest raised his right arm, and in a voice husky with fear cried, "Auvant, Satan!"

The monster came at him, knocked him heels over head in a moment, and then drawing back with his horns entangled in the priest's great gown, carried him back with him into the cellar. With one look of intense anguish cast on his followers he cried, "Brethren, take care of yourselves; the devil has got me!"

Such a getting upstairs as then took place was a caution to old people. The deacon seized the poker, and went again into the cellar, determined to rescue the priest or perish in the attempt. The priest had fainted, and lay flat on his back on the

ground. The deacon's old buck stood contemplating with apparent complacency his fallen enemy, wondering what he was. This was the last case of witchcraft in the town of Woodstock. Mr. Styles was knighted for his valor, and lived many years after, loved and respected by all his parishioners.

Note: This is the same Mr. Styles referred to in the chapter on Village Meeting Houses.

To Grandfather's House We Go

Twelve o'clock on Thanksgiving Day
Hurry upstairs to scrub and brush,
Gather the children in from play.
Quiet their noise with a patient "Hush!"
Dress them up in clean shirt and blouse
Today we go to Grandfather's house.

Bank the fires and try the door—
We won't be back till long after four.
Cut across the haying lot,
Through the fence to the barnyard plot.
Reach the big back door on the run—
Isn't Thanksgiving at Grandfather's fun?

"Come in, come in," at the door they say.
"This is a fine Thanksgiving Day."
"Things are all ready—we'll sit right down.
The turkey is just the exactly right brown."

Into the kitchen so filled with good cheer—
The most wonderful smells of the whole long year.
On top of the range the bright kettles steam.
On the big center table the platters gleam.
Hustle, bustle, taste and fret—
The last minute things you're bound to forget.
Tie on the apron, carry the plates.
Arrange the bowl of nuts and dates.
Put the fruit in the cut-glass cups.
Life has its down's but today it's all up's.

Now the call goes from kitchen to den,
"Come along, children," and, "Stop talking, men."
Each one finds his traditional place,
And heads are bowed while the children say grace.
Thanks for our blessings and thanks for the food,
And thanks in each heart for life that is good.
Snowy white linen, best china displayed,

All the old heirlooms once-yearly arrayed.
Now from the kitchen the turkey is brought,
Golden and savoury, huge and hot.
Then cranberry sauce, creamed onions and peas,
Mashed potatoes and turnips and squash—all these,
And celery and olives and pickles too,
Nut bread and hot rolls and sweet cider brew.

At the head of the table Grandfather stands
Carving the bird with skillful hands,
Asking for preference of dark meat or white,
Making small jokes to keep the talk light.
Round the table the plates are passed
Till all the family is served at last.
Then with abandon each one digs in,
Forgetting all thoughts about keeping thin.

The turkey devoured, some arise
    To clear away, and bring the pies—
Pumpkin, mincemeat, and apple with cheese,
    And bowls of ice cream besides, if you please.
The children squirm and their little eyes shine—
    Already they've eaten 'way past the pie line.
So round and round the table they fly
    To make some room for the pumpkin pie.
After the pie will come the candy—
    Isn't Thanksgiving at Grandfather's dandy?

Then come the leisurely coffee and sweets,
    Dried fruit and grapes and tender nut meats.
In Grandfather's eye there's a sly little glint
    As he pours the jewel-green cream of mint.
Relaxed and contented we sit at ease—
    The tots will remember Thanksgivings like these.

Then all hands help clear the dishes away
    And get out the games for an afternoon's play.
And last in the parlor we gather and sing
    While happy young voices make the house ring.

Then on with our wraps and home we go—
    It feels as though there might be snow.
As we race down the hill the children cry,
    "Look at the pretty sunset sky!"
"Wasn't it fun at the Big House?" they say.
    "Oh, what a happy Thanksgiving Day!"

A Winter Walk

EACH New England village has its maiden ladies of whom it is proud—truly cultivated women of the type which reached its finest flower in the last generation. They are as much a part of the New England picture as the magnificent trees and graceful spires. They do not have to do anything remarkable—their presence alone is enough to lend dignity to a village.

One of Woodstock's most fondly remembered maiden ladies was Miss Jessey McClellan. The number of things she managed to do is staggering. And yet when she asked young neighbors in for tea she always took time to make some special surprise for them. One resident remembers that it was in the studio of Miss Jessey's big colonial house that she tasted her first fudge. "I have a new recipe," Miss Jessey said with the enthusiasm of a young girl. "It is called fudge and we are going to make some." No sooner said than out came the chafing dish

and right before the young ladies' excited eyes she produced this new miracle, fudge.

She read books at a gallop and it was because of her interest that the library was kept alive. Had she not spread her energies in all directions she would have become a first rate artist. As it was, her miniatures brought fine prices. But most of all she liked to write and there are numerous notebooks filled with her poems and stories. In one I found this delightful sketch which she wrote in the winter of 1917, a year before she died:

I had been kept for some weeks confined to the beaten paths of the highway or the shovelled paths about our New England village. The village boasts a sidewalk of which we are extremely proud. We walk its length of smooth grey cement in summer and in the muddy days of spring and feel uplifted and patronizing toward our neighboring villages who have no sidewalks, only highroads, private paths or little runways beside the street worn by generations of feet taking the easiest directions. But in winter we say little.

After the first snowfall, after our neighbor's snowplow has gone its eccentric way down the walk—sometimes the plow hits it and oftener it does not—it ceases to be very useful. If the snow is not heavy and the weather continues cold and clear we walk up and down it, or what we can find of it for a week or so. When the inevitable thaw comes the water from snowbanks on both sides settles into it and it becomes a skating rink or a crevasse of sharp ice which cuts your rubbers and rumples your temper. Then we take to the middle of the road and stay there till Spring.

It had snowed, then rained and frozen till a thin coating of ice lay on the ground. Again it snowed and again it thawed. Then we had two more days of rain and the combination of ice, snow and bare ground I could see from my window was such that I concluded I could easily manage my favorite walk. "Over the hills and far away." I put on my arctics and my old hat, buttoned up my coat and started.

I took a short cut through my neighbor's garden. The little paths and gray bushes looked rather forlorn and winter weary. The evergreens, however, were bright and the little brown bird-

house nestling among them was cheerily awaiting its spring tenant.

I turned down the lane. Gone was the solemn old cow who used to meet me at the bars. No cheerful frogs or crickets chirped in the meadows and swamps. The snow lay drifted closely against the wall on the northern side of the lane. Sometimes it held me up—I am no trifle to hold up—then I trotted along with zest. Sometimes I crashed through and pulled myself and my arctics in and out of the crushy snow wondering uneasily if I should permanently injure my new foot coverings, and rubber getting scarcer every day and prices higher. It is hard to have to keep one's mind on one's feet when air and sky are so beautiful and so much more worthwhile.

However, the drifts lessened, and the little stream at the foot of the hill gurgled cheerfully. Small pools of water in the swampy meadow had frozen over and lay pinky and purply and golden as they reflected the shades of evening. I turned as I climbed the long hill and looked behind me to the East.

The low lines of the New England village stretched peacefully away in front of me. Its white houses and green blinds buried in clumps of evergreen or thickets of maple tree trunks and branches. The graceful colonial steeple of the church brooded over it all. Farther north the Academy belfry loomed up, a shapeless monument of a building. The village was dumb and quiet. Far behind it rolled away the blue hills of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Above the sky was blue turning to pink and a silver moon, nearly full, floated in the sky. The colors were such as Japanese artists love to seize upon.

As I stood there the clock struck five and I forgot the belfry and its ugliness as the sweet tones of its bell floated into the still air.

In the early seventies when the unwieldy and unbeautiful Academy was erected a shipload of bells was sent over to New York to be sold. They had been taken from some of the suppressed monasteries and churches of the Catholic Church in Spain. This sweet throated bell was purchased by a friend of the town and sent up to hang in the belfry of the then new

building where it has rung the hours and sounded the school calls to work and play ever since.

Five o'clock was late. I should have loved to linger and watch the moon but I began to realize that I was some distance from civilization. I took one long look and turned to climb the hill again. Soon I went into the deep woods. Bits of golden ice glimmered between the roots of the trees.

I began to collect my winter bouquet with some long slim golden rod stems. Then I found some clusters of branches the fine down still clinging to them. Farther on I got some brown spires of steeplebush and meadowsweet. In a little glade I added a bit of color from some wild rose hops. It was perfectly quiet. I heard not the faintest sound from anywhere. No living thing crossed my path. The odd little footprints of birds and small animals were invisible. The hard snow passed them on without a sign. The crrp, crrp of my arctics through the snow was the only sound I heard. There were few evergreens in the wood. Occasionally I passed a gleaming white birch, the lady of the forest, slender and elegant. For the most part the big trees stood gaunt and silent. The ground under them was strewn with broken branches eloquent of the struggle with winter winds some days before. The winds I knew well. They had not confined fury to mere branches but took the cupola off my barn.

I emerged from the woods and continued my bouquet. I found some thick stalks of mullein, some fragile stems which had once been Queen Anne's lace, still lacy, several branches of the knobby bush clover stems, a stalk or two of the evening primrose bells. Evening primrose bells suggest real flowers better than any other seed pod I know. I got a few branches of oak leaves, still reddish, and along the low, tumble down road I pulled a few branches of bittersweet.

I didn't find any of the silver grey milkweed pods or the little birds nest which always put the finishing touch to the winter bouquet but I got a very satisfactory bunch and reached the highroad well laden.

The twilight was going. As I rounded a bend and came out into more open country I saw the moon again. The pink had

conquered the blue. A faint rosy blush spread over all the eastern sky, reflected in all the ice patches, and through it the moon glowed no longer silvery and Japanese but solid and golden. In the west was a clear glowing yellow. It promised cold weather and it was growing cold fast.

Another little hill and I am back on the outskirts of the village. Two women emerge with a lantern from a barn and run toward their house. I arrive at the beginning of the slippery sidewalk. There are patches of clear cement emerging here and there and I decide to try it. I also begin to pick up the bits of loose branches and twigs that I always collect at the end of my walks for my fireplace, the spoilage of the highroads.

Suddenly I descend, not as unskillfully as might be considering my figure, but heavily, upon the ice, unpadded hummocks of it. Still it might have been a worse fall.

After a hasty look in all directions to see if any stray person saw me, I scramble up, rub my bruises, pick up my bouquet and my twigs and take the middle of the road. I fill my arms full of branches. No one is moving and I can carry a good many when I have no fear of encountering curious eyes: people who stare sharply at me, thinking that it is not common to see a middle aged, supposedly well-to-do woman walking the streets with her arms full of faggots like a peasant war victim. I find a long branch which I cannot break easily and haul it along. These twigs make such a pretty evening blaze and the long branch gives me much pleasure. To bring it into the house intact; keeping the house bric-a-brac also intact; then to stick one end into the fire pushing it gently as the pieces burn until it is entirely consumed is a diverting occupation for a winter evening. When one is a lonely old maid with nothing but books and a fireside with which to fill one's empty moments it is a small joy but efficient.

I am at home somewhat stiff but altogether happy and supper smells good. I arrange my twigs in the fireplace and put paper under them to light them after my evening meal. I also arrange the bouquet in the fireplace before the big maple backlog. It too, a little later will give out its bit of latent heat and sunshine. Winter bouquets I am sorry to say are only tem-

porary joys. Placed in a vase in the house the oak leaves shrivel and blacken, the fuzz of the little branches that looked so pretty outside floats off softly as the heated air dries them to stick, oh how they stick, to curtains and cushions. So I burn them. Nature is prodigal of winter bouquets and doesn't mind it.

I take off my wraps. My walk is over and my little maid comes smilingly in to announce firmly, "Supper is served!"

Little Town of Bethlehem

Against the sky the trees their patterns trace
In feathered fans and fancy work of lace.
One after one the Christmas stars come out.
On hills and valleys snow lies all about.

The night is still. The little old hill town
Wears Christmas trimmings like a jeweled crown.
The white church steeple fluorescing light,
One slender candle burning in the night,
Pours forth glad music of the Christmastide

To every dwelling of the countryside.
Villagers pause and listen to the story
Of Bethlehem, and comprehend its glory,
Feeling the angels and the stable near
And knowing well that Bethlehem is here.

ELMVALE SCHOOL

Passing of the One-room Schoolhouses

THE patter of little feet long before rising time is an accepted part of Christmas day in every household. This year there were two Christmas mornings in Woodstock, the second one the opening day of the New School. As early as five o'clock tots pattered to their mothers' beds to say that it was time to get up. One considerate little seven year old, finding the bathroom occupied by a shaving father, fixed herself a washbasin in the kitchen, scrubbed her face and hands, and dressed and presented herself to her mother, buttoned to the last button.

Anxiety over new bus schedules and excitement over the great day caused worriers to bolt their breakfasts, bringing on an unprecedented number of stomach aches for the school nurse to comfort. But in spite of the fact that schedules had been turned topsy turvy, everyone got to school on time.

As busses emptied their loads the wide brick hallways became filled with dazed children, intent looks on their young

faces as they tried in their minds' eyes to find the locations of rooms from maps which Mr. Milnor, the principal, had foresightedly prepared for them. Signs in his artistic hand pinned up over doorways and entrances gave an Alice-In-Wonderland air to the corridors and many a child must have felt himself grow inches as he found the room where he belonged.

Everything was in shipshape order. Books were on the shelves, desks were arranged in pleasant groups, materials were in the capacious cupboards, and pictures were hung on the pin-up boards. There were even flowers in vases on the teachers' newly painted desks.

The teachers themselves, looking as fresh as the flowers, gave no hint from their appearance of the tremendous job which they and innumerable helpers from the town had accomplished during the holidays. An accumulation of over a hundred years had been sorted in the old schools, packed, trucked and unpacked, sorted again and distributed to new sets of students.

Five of the teachers had taught for many years in the old one-room schools and had waited a long time for this day.

As the morning progressed visitors tip-toeing about the halls and looking into rooms were amazed to see classes proceeding without a hitch and for all the world as though the school had been running for weeks. They were surprised also at how little noise carried from room to room so that while first graders played "Go In and Out the Window" to music the second graders went on with their reading undisturbed. It was a joy to see children who had been cramped for space in the old schoolhouses swing and dance around the large room without fear of bumping into desks.

The psychology of signs reading "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" over doors to the washrooms had its hoped-for effect and wash-up time was as orderly as going to church. One child announced after the day was over that they went eight times, which sounds like an exaggeration. Perhaps it was wishful thinking after the many years of having to plough through snow.

The drinking fountains made a great impression especially

because there was no limit set on the number of times a child was allowed to drink his full.

The fluorescent lights fascinated both little and big children. First graders wanted to have them turned on and off over and over again, and a sixth grader said the lights looked like ice-cube pans. Everyone had difficulty at first getting used to the artificial light on a rainy day.

Too bad the first day had to be rainy but better that than a blizzard and perhaps it was just as well that it was too wet to go outside for recess. The children were set free to roam the halls and rooms at will. By that time their early morning strain had left them and their shining faces were a picture as they took in all the wonders. Eyes nearly popped out of little heads. Girls skipped up and down halls swinging hands as girls do and boys lunged aroung giving each other pokes and talking to each other in the affectionately insulting way of boys.

In the small hours of the preceding night their Santa, Mr. Milnor, had filled their stockings, so to speak. In the hallways there are showcases where the pupils' work is displayed. With loving hands and an artist's touch Mr. Milnor had filled them when all the town was sleeping. In some he had arranged art work which he himself had done and in others interesting collections. In one he had gathered together mementos from the old schools: A stove poker and shovel, a milk pail which had been used for carrying water, a horseshoe and door latches, an old desk support which had been made into an ornamental sign bracket, an oil lamp, a pick-ax, a Bible from the Chandler School opened at the Book of Ruth, and part of a desk whose caption read, "Will this old desk seat become a carved tray?" The children peered at these things and wagged their heads.

The hot lunches, which in later months, filled the school with mouth-watering smells and fattened the children and put roses in their cheeks, could not be served the first day. But at least the children had the little extra fillip of attractive trays from which to eat their box lunches.

There is a saying among the Chinese that some houses are happy houses and others are not. Every one has felt this when

going into a house or living in one. And everyone seems to feel that the New School is a "happy house."

During the afternoon session Mrs. Anderson had her sixth grades write down their feelings about their first day in the school. Here are some excerpts:

"The weather vane is like a tower with a squirrel on the tower. It is really like a surprise." (The weathervane caused a great deal of comment.)

"In the morning in the other school Mrs. Anderson was building a fire. Now I don't think I will ever see her building a fire in this school."

"Mr. Milnor has worked hard." (Several children commented on this.)

"I like the shapes and the windows."

"I will not chew gum in school." (This resolution was carefully printed and framed at the bottom of one essay.)

"Another thing I liked was how kind teachers stood in the playground and in the doors. They did it so the children would keep clean on the grounds and to keep the school clean."

"When I came in my eyes filled with joy at the sight of the new school."

"Today I saw a thing which made me feel safe. I suppose you want to know what it was. It was Mrs. Reardon (the nurse) fixing a student who had cut his foot. It is a nice feeling to know that there is care for you even when you are not home. I think the new school is a wonderful gift for all us children."

"When you are in a new school the first day it feels funny." And last, here is an entire essay, written by Leonard Marcy:

"My First Day in the New School."

"It was the night before Tuesday and I couldn't sleep. I was full of excitement down to my toes. When morning came I sprang from my bed and put on my clothes. I ate my breakfast and rushed off to school. When I got there I could hardly stand up, for my dream for a new school had not been forgot. I looked all around as far as I could and I saw it was spic and span from the top of the roof to the depth of the cellar.

"It was so bright it looked like the noon day light. The

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shafters were glittering like crystals of silver. The paint on the walls was so bright it made everything look right. The blackboards, the cupboards, and even the sink were useful those short winter days. The workmen I'm sure are entitled to a long, long rest because everyone knows they did their very very best. Now this is all I have to say, but I'll write some more someday, O. K.!"

Not until years from now will the children begin to realize that this was the end of an era. And only slowly will they begin to understand what the little schoolhouses gave them.

The thing is so intangible that even then they will not be able to express it. What they will do, as every generation does, will be to brag to their offspring about how much harder life was when they were young.

Can't you just hear them making a big story of it? "When I was your age," they'll say, "there were rats as big as squirrels in those old schoolhouses. We had to leave our dinner pails out in the entry way and our sandwiches would be so frozen that we had to thaw them on the old wood stoves. Those stoves were cussed things. Pipes were strung back and forth across the ceiling and it took the teachers from six in the morning till schooltime to get them going well enough to heat the drafty rooms. You could take your choice of broiling in desks next to them or catching pneumonia at the other side of the room. We used to fetch pails of water from away down the road at the neighbors' and sometimes it froze in the pails before we got back to school. We had a cupful of it apiece for washing our hands and scarcely a drop to drink. We hated going out to the little houses so usually we didn't. We had to take turns having lessons with the teacher because there were anywhere from four to eight classes to a schoolhouse. The playgrounds were too small for real games so we never had fun. We had to take papers to school to make a little money to buy things like swings. There never were enough books or pencils or paper or scissors to go around and we made our own paints and paste. We didn't have things easy the way you do now." That is what they will say.

The intangibles they will remember with nostalgia will be

the coziness of the little schoolhouses, the quiet of being away off alone in small groups, the feeling of being king in a small domain, the joy of making much with very little, the lessons learned by osmosis from older classes, the little graduating exercises at the end of the year with speeches and songs and afterward a picnic in the gravel yard. And above all they will remember the teachers whose wonderful spirit somehow filled the poor rooms with a happy, warm feeling and whose marvelous management somehow arranged things so that four classes were kept as busy as beavers all the time. They will remember how the teachers triumphed over their drab, rundown surroundings by force of character and resourceful hands and made the children love to go to school.

When the new school opened six little houses stood empty. "What will become of them?" everyone is saying. Well, that has been a poser for the Town. The money for new schools used to be raised by subscription rather than taxes and each district ran its own school so that the records were not kept by the Town. Old records of district meetings might bring some of the history to light but as yet none have come to hand. The oldest residents in town say that, with the exception of the Valley and Neighborhood schoolhouses which were built in 1900, all the schools have been standing as long as they can remember and that their parents attended them before that. So they must all be at least 100 years old and perhaps even 150.

Until not so long ago there were sixteen school districts in Woodstock. They were: North, East, South, Elmvale, Hill and Valley (these first six still in use); Harrisville, built in 1865 and closed in 1917; Quasset, English Neighborhood and West; the Chandler School in East Woodstock closed about 1925; Skinner District on Rocky Hill, now a dwelling; Center school, near the Center cemetery on the County Road; Dewing District, near Black Pond, long since vanished; the Red White schoolhouse near Union, so called because of its change of color from red to white; and the Redhead school called that not because a lot of red heads attended it but because a family by the name of Redhead lived near by.

The Quasset school, of traditional red brick, still stands, and

was used continuously for 200 years, with only one short break, until about 1943, making it the oldest schoolhouse standing in the State and the one in longest use.

The disposal of the schoolhouses would make a good story of how such questions are settled in a Town Meeting town like Woodstock. To the loss of the book but the pleasure of the town the story is still being enacted.

The Theft Detecting Society

THE times just after the Revolutionary War were unsettled, as they are after all wars, and men returning home to Woodstock found, to their dismay, that thievery was prevalent and that new and untried laws carried little conviction. Horses were naturally at a premium and horse stealing became an occupation. A gang of men went into the business in a big way, stealing horses and hiding them in a horse pound just over the Woodstock line in Ashford. The place they chose was on a high hill with a dense growth of woods and underbrush and to this day it is known as Horse Pound Hill. There they hid the horses in a stockade until they could dispose of them safely, and they were so smart at their tricks that it was a long time before they were discovered.

Such Wild West goings on must have convinced the men of the town that they would have to take things into their own hands. In the cooperative way which characterized all their undertakings, they gathered together one March day in 1793 at the home of Elijah Williams to form a society for detecting thefts of horses and other property.

Members joining the society paid a fee of $1 and only mem-

bers received the benefits of mutual protection. Officers were elected and eight suitable persons were chosen "who shall furnish themselves with Able Horses and shall engage to pursue on the shortest notice any theft that may be committed upon any member of their society." In other words, even if the hay was down and a shower was coming up.

Article six read: "Whenever any member of this society shall have the misfortune to lose property to the amount of Forty Shillings by having his Home, Shop, or Store brocken, his Horse or other property stolen, he shall apply to the Treasurer or any one or more of the Committee, who if they judge proper shall inform one or more of the persons appointed to pursue and Detect Thefts, and shall Deliver him or them Moneys to defray the expense of the Pursuit, and the said Treasurer, Committee and Pursuers shall lay before the Society at their first meeting after such an affair shall take place an account of the expenses and the manner of conducting their trust for the Inspection and Approbation of the Society."

An entry in the ancient books of the meetings, which now reside in the State Library at Hartford, states: "Voted to accept bills as follows for expenses and time spent in pursuing on account of Mr. Jonathan May's store being brocken open and goods taken.

Aman Lyon bill 4 days @ 1.00 a day	$4.00
Cash expended	3.04
Chester Child 1½ day	1.50
Cash expended	.77
Wm. Bowen 2 days	2.00
Cash expended	.75
Phinias Walker 1 day	1.00
Cash expended	.50
Wm. Flynn 2 days	2.00
Cash expended	2.50
Total	18.06

One method used for raising money for such expenses was

to fine each member who was not present at meetings a certain sum. Today the same rule holds and members are fined fifteen cents for absence.

In 1795 all hands were out to find the horse of the president of the society. That pursuit cost $100. From the records it appears that after that there were very few thefts, perhaps six or eight in all the history of the society. It would be interesting to know more about what punishment, if any, was meted out to the culprits, but the books do not say. In fact all the color of the stories of the thefts is left out and only the hard dry facts given.

As thieving died down the organization became more and more an excuse to get together for a social time. At first the meetings were held quarterly but they dwindled to one annually, on the last Tuesday of December, and it was not until over a hundred years after its beginning that ladies were admitted.

The men seem to have had a high old time. It was a tradition until very recently that they always prepare an oyster stew for dinner. A bill rendered by George Bowen who kept Bowen's store in the brick ell of Dr. Holt's house gives a little idea of the beverages consumed and the fantastic prices.

Woodstock, November 20th, 1826,
Theft Detecting Society

1 Bottle Gin	$ .42
1 Bottle Rum	.42
1 Dr. Brandy	.42
I Dr. Gin	.42
1 bowl sugar	.25
1 Bottle Gin	.42
1 bowl sugar	.25
1 Bottle Rum	.42
1 Bottle Gin	.42
1 bowl sugar	.25
30 meals	7.50
	$11.19
Deduct part of Bottle Rum left (!)	.19
	$11.00

The villagers became interested in prohibition just after

this and at the meeting held in 1829 the Clerk wrote in the minutes, "No ardent spirits drank today." After that they were never used again.

A Literary Committee was added later which was to provide a program for the entertainment of the group. This practice continues. Members belong out of pure sentiment since all actual necessity for such an organization long since disappeared.

The Society is one of Woodstock's unique possessions for it is the oldest Theft Detecting Society still in existence in the country and the oldest society of any kind in the State which has held consecutive meetings without a break for such a number of years.

In a history of the Society written by Charles Harris May for the 1886 Bi-Centennial Celebration of Woodstock, he speaks to the young men of his audience these stirring words:

"Those older members are gone now, of course, and when they dropped out younger members came up and signed their names below as the older ones passed away, and I find that today in looking over the list I myself and those of my age are in the front ranks and our names will soon cease to be called in those meetings.

"I beg of you young men who hear me tonight to remember that the young men whose history you have heard read who established these institutions were but from twenty to twenty-two to twenty-eight years old. They had no baseball clubs and did not ride bicycles. They took up the shovel and the hoe and laid these walls and felled these forests. It might today be thought best to disband that organization (The Woodstock Theft Detecting Society) but still it is an old institution and it is worthy, I think, to be incorporated in the history of the town. These institutions must not be thrown away. You will render an account of your citizenship some day and remember what I tell you tonight. Take this opportunity and prepare to take these responsibilities growing every day and transmit this heritage we leave to you, to your generations that come after you, and when you have done and the curtain drops and shuts all earthly things from your vision may you find your treasures where thieves will not break in and steal."

The Old Mills

IANT Progress, striding through New England in the 1800's, paused a while in Woodstock to toy with little industries, then changed his mind and went off to plant his railroads and monster factories in other towns. The busy brooks, once stopped in their course by dams and singing millwheels, flowed once more unimpeded on their old familiar ways. Woods which had sounded with the scold of axe and scream of saws nursed their wounds and rested to renew their growth. Helpless millworkers caught in a trap of whirling wheels hurried away to chain themselves once and for all to merciless machines. Farmers with new horseless carriages to sport on Saturday afternoons salved their Puritan consciences by making errands to bigger shopping centers. The old-time general stores sold their goods at auction and either closed up shop or held on by the grace of housewives who had forgotten to get baking powder or shoe strings on their last trip to town. After one century of self-sufficiency and another of humming industry the old town settled back in her rocking chair to let the cattle with their quiet munching provide a modest and unhurried living. So now today, with no center of drug stores, filling stations, groceries and hardware stores such as cut a scar through practically every New England town, Woodstock is unique. With none of the earmarks of the suburban, and yet civilized, it gives friendliness if it is desired and peace if it is sought.

Looking at Woodstock today it is unbelievable that at one time there was such thriving industry here. Who would imagine that the shoe industry alone gave employment to 4,918 males and 4,907 women and girls in this area in the one year of 1845. In that year 5,651,580 pairs of shoes had been accredited to Woodstock and fifty bushels of shoe pegs in that one year alone. This seems fantastic but it must be remembered that families

were large in those days, sometimes running to twenty children and all hands, big and small, helped.

The only place in the country which still makes shoe pegs is Bartlett, New Hampshire, but in the early days all shoes were pegged with wooden pegs, well over a hundred to a shoe.

Perhaps the need for wooden pegs accounted for the fact that the first shoe factory was started in Woodstock Valley by Peletiah and Zenas Wight. Much of the terrain of West Woodstock is characterized by rocky ledges unsuitable for agriculture and consequently is extensively forested. Lumber was always an important industry in that section and the wood for the pegs would be near at hand. The Wights made a specialty of the shoe called the "stoggy" and for years after the shoe factory was started Woodstock Valley was called "Stoggy Hollow."

Men and women, boys and girls all hurried to take advantage of the new employment offered and soon the shoe business was booming. Vast numbers were employed in it. Every house in Woodstock and for miles around had a room fitted or added for a shoe-making shop. The leather was cut at the factory and taken home to be sewed by hand, and the buttons sewed on, I suppose. Then the uppers were returned to the factory where they were pegged to the soles.

So successful was the business that other concerns sprang up in West and North Woodstocks, accounting for the rapid growth of those sections.

Tanning was an art in itself. The skins were soaked for six months in a water solution with the inner bark of trees. Oak-tanned leather was the best. Asked how the shoes felt on the feet, old-timers grin and are noncommital.

Woodstock's sale shoe shops and factories which were credited with being the first in Connecticut were stranded by the law of progress but P. T. Leonard and Co. carried on in Woodstock Valley until the 1870's and several people can remember Walter Snow's shoe shop in the basement of the parsonage on Woodstock Hill. Some can remember the time when uppers for shoes were finished in Woodstock for the factories in Webster.

The discovery of a large deposit of iron ore near Black

Pond in West Woodstock brought about the first industry in town. Benjamin Marcy and others established a forge and furnace in 1760 and made iron bars which were sold to blacksmiths and nail makers. The works were destroyed by a freshet during the Revolution and never reestablished but the ore was carried to Stafford for many years for smelting and Mr. Olin Marcy can remember the oxen drawing it in carts. He says the iron pit is still there.

West Woodstock can also claim the first grist and saw mill and brick yard. One of the earliest settlers, Ebenezer Lyon, a man of wealth for that day and some influence, built a dam and mill at the outlet of Black Pond. He used slave labor for the job and the dam is the only existing evidence that there were once slaves here. The remains of the dam can still be seen.

It can readily be understood why Ebenezer Lyon prospered. In those early days the first two things that were attended to were a meeting house and a grist and saw mill, and often the meeting house took second place. Boards for houses and meal from corn were the first necessities. The man who could saw the huge timbers and grind the meal had all the neighbors in his debt and therefore, next to the minister, was top man. Often he carried the debts on his books for years but almost always they were finally balanced. In a day when direct barter prevailed he had only to give service for goods in return. It is very clear who had the advantage.

The lesson must have made itself understood to many canny Yankees for as the town grew, mills and dams sprang up all along the streams. I have counted over 30 dams, most of them washed out, and ten mills are known. Many more not recorded must have used the power harnessed by all those dams.

Of all the old-time mills the only one standing today is the one built by Chester Marcy near Black Pond. It is now owned by William Reynolds. The old millwheel is still there and the grist and saw and shingle mills are all intact, but, needless to say, not in use. But the life never seems to go out of those old mills. It is as though they were just waiting for someone to say the magic word which will bring the water to play again upon the old wheels.

Up and down saws are very rarely found nowadays, since they were the earliest type used. Before the streams were harnessed to do man's work a deep pit used to be dug and a log laid across it. One man would stand in the pit and another on top of the log. With a saw about eight feet long the two men would cut planks the length of the log. When the sawmills came in the "pitman" became the rod which connected the up and down saw with the power. The scoring of the boards on planks in old houses will tell truthfully the age of the house. The huge timbers found in our forests could be cut only with an up and down saw. When the circular saws came in they could not handle the wide planks. That is why only very old houses have wide boards.

Mr. Everett May of East Woodstock can remember riding the logs as a boy while they travelled against the old up and down saw . . . It wasn't so dangerous as it sounds. But the circular saws were extremely dangerous and cussed things. Mr. May remembers seeing a boy crippled for life on one of those.

The circular saw left well-defined circular marks, some of them very wobbly for the saw was difficult to control. Planks from these marks date from about 1814 or probably later in Woodstock.

Woodworking was the highest state to which a mill could be brought. Some of the little mills in Woodstock must have engaged in this sort of work but it was such an accepted part of the life that no special mention is made of woodworking other than in connection with Skinner's woodworking shop in North Woodstock and John Lake's tub and pail factory started in South Woodstock in 1842. It was the "First, last and only tub and pail shop" in this part of the state. 6,000 tubs and pails were reported as the annual output. The tubs were marketed in Boston and the pails in Norwich. John Lake also had a sash and blind shop. He was the grandfather of Everett J. Lake who became Governor of the state.

The term factory was beginning to replace the term mill during the first half of the 1800's. This is significant for it marked a new development which was to usher in our present day industrial society.

The Factories

SINCE the earliest times of recorded history women had made clothing for their families through the various processes of carding, spinning, weaving, fulling and sewing. It was an occupation which kept their hands constantly busy until only a little over 150 years ago. The first change in the ancient pattern came to Woodstock when Deacon Henry Lyon set up a fulling mill in 1791 below the old slave dam in West Woodstock.

Fulling was the process of shrinking and thickening the cloth after it had been woven. Through the long winter months women spun the wool into yarn sitting snugly in the corners of the huge old fireplaces and, the men helping, wove it into cloth in the rooms set aside for that purpose. Then when the warm bright days of spring came they bundled their yards of fine new cloth down to the swollen brooks. With their skirts tied up they would wash the cloth as best they could and then with their bare feet they would tread it till it shrank and

thickened to the limit. Perhaps it was tedious but what a happy occupation on the first warm days when brooks call even grown people to dabble in their sun-spotted pools.

Then along came Deacon Lyon with his fulling mill with its power-driven stocks which stamped the cloth, and the sound of their stamping was added to the other old-time sounds which have long since vanished from New England life. Now women brought their prized yards of cloth to the mill for fulling and piled them carefully in separate piles; for it would not do for Amariah's cloth to be mistaken for Almira's.

First the cloth must be washed with the fuller's earth brought from England so that all the grease and dirt was removed. Many old saws derived from fuller's earth, among them this: "Money, Wife, is the true Fuller's Earth for Reputation, there is not a Spot or Stain but what it can take out."

The fulling mill must always be placed in the open country where the tenter frames could be set up and fenced in. When we say that we are on tenter hooks we are referring back to the times when cloth was stretched taut from hook to hook to dry.

After the cloth was washed and stamped it was stretched outside on these hooks and a pretty picture a field full of new cloth must have been on a bright blue day.

Deacon Lyon sold his mill to Daniel Mascraft who loosened women's tie to home one more inch by setting up a carding machine. Now housewives flocked to the mill not only for finishing but for carding and returned home with rolls of fleecy wool ready for the spinning. Then endless miles were walked back and forth, back and forth by the nimble young feet of women and girls spinning to the song of the wheel.

Then that sound, too, began to die away as one more loop in the chain of women's time-honored work was loosened.

As far back as 1640 England had awakened to the potentialities of cotton and during the 1700's had gradually developed machines for spinning and weaving. But she was jealous of her secret and until the Revolution managed to keep us out of competition. But our accounts had hardly been settled with her when spinning and weaving mills were mushrooming all along

the streams of the sea-board. The one closest at hand and one of the first, the Slater mill at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, is preserved as a museum. It should be well worth a trip to see.

With these dates in mind it is difficult for me to understand the statement of Richard M. Bayles in his History of Windham County that cotton spinning reached Woodstock a little late for its own benefit—in 1814. That seems to me fairly close on the heels of others which are considered the oldest and were not started until late in the 1700's.

Before the final step of mill weaving came, spun yarn was still brought home from the mills for weaving.

Then down the stream on Muddy Brook at East Woodstock in 1815 blossomed, full-blown, two factories, the Woodstock Manufacturing Company for the making of cotton and wool cloth and the Muddy Brook Cotton Manufacturing Company, and Woodstock was in the manufacturing business.

In 1817 the Arnold Manufacturing Co. in South Woodstock, was organized by Moses Arnold and others for cotton spinning.

In 1828 the property in Harrisville which is now the Putnam Water Company and which had been used for many years as a saw and grist mill was sold to Edward B. Harris who gave his name to that section. He erected a factory where he made cotton machinery and later cotton cloth.

The old Baptist meeting house at Quasset was converted into a woolen mill. In South Woodstock Christopher Arnold manufactured twine and cotton batting and Daniel Warner also made cotton batting, which presumably began to take the place of wool in the quilts for which our grandmothers are famous.

At Sprucedale Arthur Williams had a stockingette yarn factory and at the outlet of Black Pond there was a shoddy wool factory. Shoddy was a coarse inferior woolen cloth, sometimes in the old days matted rather than woven and from it comes our term of disdain.

Miss Florence Kenyon's grandfather came over from England, bringing with him his knowledge of woolen manufacture and set up a factory in Woodstock Valley which was very successful for many years in the making of fine woolen cloth. In

more recent years the mill was the Still River Box Shop, run by Mrs. Susan Kenyon's husband.

With the coming of all these factories carding, spinning and weaving in the home were gradually abandoned, though the home and factory continued to supplement each other until well into the century. Girls and young women whose hands were now lost without the constant feel of wool and yarn went into the factories to work. East Woodstock had its row of mill houses to accommodate extra hands as they were needed for stepped up production and for the new innovation of canning. Mrs. Lily May of East Woodstock, who has told me much about those factory days, remembers her introduction to tomatoes in the cannery. The smell of so many tomatoes all at once was overwhelming to one unaccustomed to them but strangely enough she grew to like them rather than hating them.

The Woodstock Manufactory of East Woodstock suffered a severe reversal through the hands of an English overseer who cut all the warp in the looms before absconding. A young man in their employ repaired the damage with skill and ingenuity and saved the company from ruin.

Besides these factories for the making of cloth and yarn there were many other little shops in Woodstock. In North Woodstock there was a canning factory run by steam, Skinner's blacksmith shop had a paintshop upstairs and there was a machine shop across from where the Hazeltons now live. Sleighs were made at the place formerly belonging to Emil Johnson and now owned by Howard Neff. There are still some of the old sleighs in the barn.

Between North and East Woodstock was the shop of Peregrine White where tools and implements were made. His silversmith shop produced flat silver which is at a premium today. But it is for his clocks that he is most famous. They were tall grandfather clocks "decorated with full moons and elaborate appurtenances highly esteemed and patronized by all the surrounding country."

Most important of all in North Woodstock was the wagon and carriage shop started by L. M. Deane and Co. in 1835. The excellent character of the work won the wagons and carriages

wide popularity. Later the shop was run by handshaking, 360 pounder, Thomas Milligan who also had a rushing business in a tavern and big general store where everything under the sun was sold until 1900.

During the one hundred years between the early 1800's and the early 1900's Woodstock developed from a farming community where hitherto only the simple arts and trades needed for existence had been practiced into a thriving town composed of villages crowded with milling and manufacture.

Today there are only two mills of all the scores, the Sprucedale Manufacturing Co., which property has come down through the Williams family since the early days of milling, and the Stillwater Worsted Mills in East Woodstock. These cannot be classed as Woodstock enterprises for they are owned and run by outsiders.

What happened that the hum of long-forgotten sounds vanished to be replaced, not by the more insistent noises of present day industry, but by the quiet of pastoral life? Well, "flood, fire and financial panic were inimical to Woodstock," according to Bayle's history.

"The first serious disaster occurred in 1834 when the new dam constructed at Muddy Brook by Col. Jonathan May was carried away by a freshet. The Muddy Brook Manufactory never regained its footing. The commercial collapse of 1837 brought down several prominent shoe operators. Factories north, south, east and west were destroyed by fire. There was much loss and havoc from a heavy freshet on February 13, 1866. The new reservoir and dam in South Woodstock constructed by Daniel Warner intending large cotton manufacture operations was washed away, also Lake's sash and blind shop, a blacksmith's, a store and three bridges. To these casualties were added the inevitable changes resulting from the introduction of new methods of business and travel." In short the laws of nature and progress.

So now here we are in our little town and it is just as though all these things had been a dream.

The Village Blacksmith

THE village blacksmith shops where men gathered for gossip while the horses were being shod and children loitered to watch iron being shaped into useful articles have long since vanished. Before long blacksmithing will be a lost art. There are no apprentices serving out their time and learning the tricks of the trade by the sides men who knew what they were about and set high standards.

Besides being fine artisans the blacksmiths were generally rough and tough. There were some pious ones but most of them did their share of tippling. While the ladies occupied themselves with sewing circles and tea cakes the men could assert themselves in the shops with good robust talk.

In the early days of settlement a blacksmith was as important as the minister or miller. If, traveling through this

wilderness, you came upon a cluster of houses and found there these three, you knew that a town capable of supporting itself had been established.

We think nowadays of blacksmiths in terms of horseshoeing and odd jobs. But there was a time when they were essential to life and their workmanship was so universally excellent that they held a high place as technical experts. Consider the things they made: The nails of all sizes from spikes to tacks. The hardware, including the H., L. and strap hinges so prized in old houses now. The latches, locks and padlocks and the necessary footscrapers anchored in every doorstep. The andirons, fire tongs, cranes, pokers and screens for the huge fireplaces. The roasting spits, pots, kettles, frying pans, toasters, trivets, ladles, forks, skimmers and pancake turners for cooking over the open fires. The wrought iron candlesticks and other lighting devices. The scythes, sickles, grain cradles, shovels, hoes, axes, chains and haying forks for farming. The iron tires on carriages and wagons and parts for saddles and harnesses and other horse tack. Tools for all kinds of occupations. The weather vanes high on church steeples, so important to people who had to do their own weather forecasting. And, for the rich, fences, gates and balcony railings of elaborate detail to beautify their homes.

As all this work was gradually taken from their hands by factories the blacksmiths were left with the shoeing of horses and small jobs. This was enough in itself to keep a man and several apprentices busy. Every house in town had a horse and some families had several. A horse had to be shod every month and sometimes every two weeks. At one time and another there were as many as forty blacksmith shops in Woodstock—perhaps even more. Now there are only three: Albert H. Hibbard's Muddy Brook Blacksmith Shop in East Woodstock, Asa R. Scranton, Jr.'s, in South Woodstock and Walter Bruno's in West Woodstock.

I went over to East Woodstock one spring day to have a talk with Bert Hibbard and watch him shoe horses. He was expecting Florence and Mildred Hopkins with their palominos. I arrived before they did and had a chance to look around.

The shop is an old faded red building with the old-time small-paned windows. Bert Hibbard was standing at the door, a big, handsome powerful man in his seventies and full of stories about his trade and the old days. It was a crisp day and I expected to find a roaring fire in the forge to give some warmth. But when we went inside I couldn't see any fire at all. "Where is the forge?" I asked. "Right over here," he said, and we picked our way through a conglomeration of scrap, nails and horseshoes. He poked the coals a little and showed me how the blower worked. Right away there was a fine blaze. "Used to have to do this with a big leather hand bellows. This is a lot easier," he said. "Soft Coal—that's what makes it so dirty in here."

"Sort of let the place rundown," he added, looking around him at the pile of wheels, machinery, and heaven knows what all in the back of the shop. "Used to have it all cleared out. Sometimes had as many as twenty horses in here waiting to be shod. One day I put on a hundred shoes. Don't know how. Couldn't believe it myself when I got done.

"I suppose you want to know about the clang of the forge? Can't figure it out because here's where you get the clang." And he showed me the anvil and the hammer which wasn't nearly so big as I thought it would be. I had a picture in my mind of a huge hammer that would make the muscles stand out on a man's arm. But before Bert Hibbard was through telling stories I understood that a man had to be rugged for the job. "The smith, a mighty man is he."

If a man was strong he could handle an ordinary horse, and a mean one he could tie up with pulleys, but even so he stood the chance of being kicked right through the side of his shop. For oxen there was a stanchion where an ox was imprisoned and then cranked up with a wheel and pulley. Bert Hibbard rubbed his ribs and said he'd had many a bone broken in his time.

The girls arrived with their palominos, beautiful golden thoroughbred horses as gentle as babies. Florence has trained hers, Silver, to do tricks and shows her at the Woodstock Fair. The horses had gone barefooted all winter and had come all the

way from West Woodstock for their summer shoes. Mr. Hibbard explained about that while he tied on his big leather apron which looks like a pair of Western chaps. "Sure, a horse has to have summer shoes and winter shoes." He showed me how the winter shoes are made, with the calks welded on, sharp pieces of iron which can get a grip in the snow and ice.

A long time ago the shoes and nails were made by the blacksmiths but then they started getting them from factories and had only to shape the shoes the right size. After Bert Hibbard had trimmed the frog he took a shoe and went over to the forge, gave the blower a turn or two and put the shoe into the hot coals. When it was right for shaping he took it out and plunged it into a pail of water and then started to shape it on the anvil, talking all the time. "There was an Irish fellow came in here once. Was sitting on a nail keg over there. Had a big umbrella rolled up tight, using it for an elbow rest. I was hammering away on a shoe, cutting it to size and the end flew off and landed right on that umbrella. When he opened it up there were more holes burned in it than there are in your mother's milk skimmer."

When the shoe was shaped right he lifted one of Silver's hoofs and started nailing it on. I noticed that the nails didn't go in straight but stuck out all around the edges. He bent the ends to clinch them on and then snipped off the tips—wringing off the nails, it's called. Having been taught that a nail must be driven straight I thought he was making a mistake. He must have sensed my surprise because he chuckled and told me another story.

"Was another Irishman, thought he could save the price of having his horse shod by a blacksmith. Nailed the shoes on himself. Went around bragging about it. 'Nary a nail paiped,' he said. 'Nary a nail paiped.' Drove those nails right into the horse's foot."

Most of Bert Hibbard's work now is on race horses. He goes up through Massachusetts to race tracks and to Stafford and Brooklyn. In a corner of his shop, beside the row of 30 fox sculls which he shot in two winters with one dog, stand long, slender strips of iron from which he makes his own shoes

for the race horses. They are dainty little things, some of them weighing only three ounces, with tiny calks brazed on them.

For big, heavy work-horses the shoes will sometimes weigh as much as 15 pounds a set. It used to be that the regular price for shoeing an ordinary horse was one dollar. But those were the days when the price of shoes was only four cents a pound. Now they cost from 14 to 18 cents and nails are not selling by the pound but by the piece, at a little over half a cent. Consequently the price of shoeing a horse has had to go up to five dollars. Even at that if a blacksmith travels far to shoe a horse he doesn't come home with much profit. Shoeing race horses, of course, costs more.

Mrs. Asa Scranton says that when she came to Woodstock some people in town had fine saddle and carriage horses. For these there were special rubber shoes at three dollars a shoe or twelve dollars a set. She said it always made her feel that it was just like life—some having fine shoes and others doing with ordinary ones and the poor work horses with their big heavy work shoes.

When she came here as a young bride from the city it was February, and sharpening time, and she remembers how the road beside her husband's blacksmith shop used to be lined with horses and carriages. Just like haying time or sugaring off time, there was sharpening time in the winter months when the horses' shoes had to be sharpened and calked frequently. Doctors had to be sure that their horses were always ready and people had to be prepared for errands and so they would line the streets waiting their turns. Sometimes the men would work until two or three in the morning getting everybody's shoes fixed. A blacksmith needed helpers, and there were always apprentices in each shop.

"At the very first they were sent for left-handed monkey wrenches, three-cornered rat tail files and many such things," said Mr. Hibbard.

"Here's a little story I heard many years ago of a blacksmith who worked with one lone apprentice—just a beginner. When his boss had to go out and operate on a horse's foot the boy was told to clean up shop and do other little things. Boss

returned home, found work undone, boy nowhere to be seen, but a little commotion was heard in back of shop. Boss found the boy poking around some old wheels and so on. Asked the boy what was doing. Said he was hunting rats. Says boss, 'How many you got?' 'Well, boss, when I get the one I'm after and two more I'll have three'."

The blacksmiths loved a practical joke and a man had to watch out lest he find himself on the hot end of a poker. One of the toughest of the blacksmiths was a man by the name of Lombard who had a shop in North Woodstock.

To quote Bert Hibbard: "The story has many times been told of one thing that happened at Lombard's old shop. Up toward English Neighborhood lived an Englishman by the name of Mike Carrington who made his appearance one morning to have the cutter for his plough straightened out. Lombard stuck it in his fire and quite likely heated it hotter than was needed, fixed it up, heated it well again, cooled the upper end and handed it to Old Mike who paddled back up the road to work.

"In the course of about a week Mike had to go down for another little job. Lombard remembered 'something' so he asked the old gent if the cutter was O. K.

" 'Sure thing,' says Old Mike, but there was one thing he couldn't understand. As he walked up toward his 'ome 'that damned critter got 'otter and 'otter all the way 'ome.'

"Lombard sat down on his shoeing box and broke out with a laugh that at least shook the windows in and around Village Corners. Lombard was a very intelligent person. Any man locked horns with him in an argument just had to watch his step to keep on even terms with Orvil Lombard. If Old Mike ever knew why the cutter got 'otter and 'otter someone else than Lombard enlightened him as to just why."

Carriage making required four special skills. There were the woodworkers, the trimmers, the painters and the blacksmiths. Some of the finest blacksmiths worked on the wagons and carriages which were made in Skinner's and L. M. Dean's shops in North Woodstock. Originally any spring a wagon or a carriage had was provided by what were called thorough

braces. They didn't have much give and a trip was a pretty bumpy experience. Bert Hibbard built many of the old conveyances over to springs, thereby giving bounces instead of bumps to many a Woodstock neighbor.

As Bert Hibbard says, the present day so-called blacksmith who shoes horses, repairs wagons and chains and whatever comes along may properly be called a jack of all trades and master of none. Most of the old blacksmiths seem to have been born with a gift and if the gift has been passed on to younger generations, it has either been lost or has turned itself to other uses.

The Vernal Equinox

DOWN in the haying lot behind our house there is a brook which fills up in the spring. It isn't much of a brook—just a ditch really, which holds the run-off from the melting snow and softening earth.

In April, or perhaps as early as March, there comes a day when the tightness of winter lets go. Ground loosens and reveals small green spurs of bulbs. The firmly packaged buds begin to unwrap their surprises. Houses so long shut in against the winter cold, spring their locks and open their windows to the soft air. Taskmaster jackets and boots and mittens lose their authority. And faces hardened against the rigors of winter relax and are friendly.

Of a sudden the house cannot hold us. We must be outside to see what miracles are taking place. The children beg for a picnic by the brook and we pack, not lunch boxes, symbols of restraints, but baskets, light and carefree.

It is only a minute to the brook but with a few steps we have bought passage to faraway places.

We spread our one winter restriction, a blanket, on the ground and take our pick from the baskets. No need to hurry or urge cleaning of plates. Behaving properly at table was left behind at the house and food is eaten lazily with the warm sun bringing out the flavors.

No need to worry either about the children drowning, because the brook is only a foot or two deep. There is a bridge of planks across it which the children have made. Floated in the brook it makes a boat to stand on.

Where do they go in their beautiful boat? To what far countries with unknown names? How big is this little ditch of

water? A lake, or an ocean? Are the bugs and worms they find fantastic creatures more wonderful than a barracuda? Are the oozing grasses under water mysterious deep sea life a diver might discover? Are the old dried hay and the pussy-willows along the shore, jungle growth and giant trees? Are the children Tom Sawyer or are they Captain Kid? Or are they primeval, primitive man, with a communication with the earth which we all must trade for our civilization?

Once, long ago, when you were a child, you played just so on a tidewater creek. It was broader but not much deeper and the rushes along the shore were like the pussywillows. You had a flat raft of boards which was your boat and you poled yourselves up and down for mornings on end, feeling—what? All those unnamable things of childhood. There is no art to tell them. Words are not floating enough; painting is too explicit or too far removed into cubes and abstractions. Music? It would have to be the music of tomtoms.

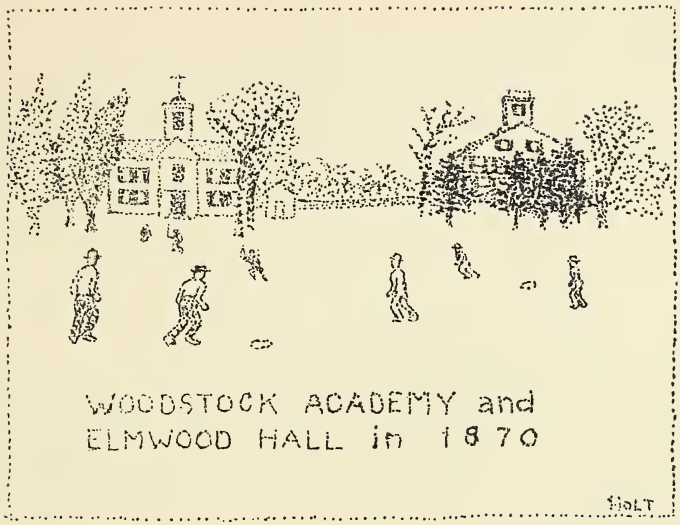
Lie on the blanket and smell the new grass. Squint your eyes so that the light makes prisms around the green blades. Bring back to mind the time when as a child you discovered your first grasshopper while you lay so in the grass. The small world of bug life suddenly blown up to human size, a world that was all around you hidden by the grass, not seen or felt—there all the time while you, a giant, stepped on it running through the fields and woods.

Feel on your back the heat of the sun so much less insistent than the heat of a fire in winter and so much more life-giving, drawing strength from your inner resources as it draws food from the dark brown soil.

Lose yourself in the noontime quietness and the limitless gift of time.

Hear faintly, as in a half-dream the muted voices of the children. Jump to their sudden cries as their boat overturns. They search your face for the sign of disapproval and, finding none, splash and laugh with the joy of getting wet at a time and place not designated by grownups.

Gather up the lunch things and return across the field to the commonplace, clock-ticking world of the house.



Woodstock Academy

IN TOWNS all up and down the eastern seaboard during the 1800's New Englanders established Academies for secondary education. They were independent institutions, built and administered with money which came from the pockets of hard working people. Some became the famous private preparatory schools of today; some disappeared; and a few continued to be used by the towns which had built them. Of these only six remain in Connecticut. Because they are privately owned and privately endowed they are listed as private schools in the Educational Directory, though they are approved by the state for certification purposes.

The quaint, grotesque, yet somehow stately buildings which still stand represent a part of the New England character which has been its greatest strength.

The story of the growth of the Woodstock Academy is in

essence the story of the growth of all the Academies and the establishment of secondary education in New England.

In the year 1800, exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, the Town of Woodstock voted to set aside a piece of land on the Common to be used for an Academy. Until that time there had been no school for secondary education in the town and boys ambitious to go on to college had been tutored by the parish ministers. But now, with a hundred years of settlement behind her and a measure of prosperity achieved, Woodstock was ready to crown her lovely hill-site with the symbol New Englanders cherished most—an institution of learning.

Forthwith the townsmen met and adopted a constitution and agreed upon the method of raising the money. It is all written down in the fine flowing hands of the times on rough yellowed paper in a leather bound volume which is kept in the vaults of a bank.

It was agreed that the expense of erecting the building should be divided into shares not exceeding thirty-five or forty dollars and each share would entitle the holder to a vote. Each proprietor was to bear the burdens and receive the benefits of the institution according to his interest therein.

The minister at that time was Priest Eliphalet Lyman who was to serve, with gloomy countenance, for fifty years. From the moment of its conception he adopted the Academy as his child. His name was the first of the thirty-one signers of the constitution and the ink was scarcely dry before he was off on horseback to sell shares. Up and down the town he rode in his knee britches and buckles, stopping at every dooryard till folks must have been afraid to see him coming. By pestering and preaching he sold the shares and the money was assured. It took only a year to get the building ready and by November of 1801 the proprietors were voting to tax themselves a dollar per share to raise money for a bell.

In those old days house raisings were great events, calling for celebrations of no ordinary nature. Whole sides and sections of houses were built on the ground and then raised into place. Steeples and belfries called for great ingenuity and just how they were raised is still a mystery even to history scholars.

On the day of the raising of the Academy steeple the carpenter lost his nerve. It must be understood that the building now standing came later and that the original one was not nearly so high. Even so it is understandable how the job would take courage. General David Holmes, relative of Oliver Wendell Holmes, rose to the occasion and received three loud cheers at the end of the day.

During the first year of school there was difficulty about wood for the stoves but Priest Lyman with his watchful eye took care that his baby should not die of the cold. Once he ran up to the school with his arms full of wood just in time to catch the teachers and pupils who were leaving, the fires having gone out. Priest Lyman called them back to classes so anxious was he that they get their money's worth of learning. Careful consideration was given to the wood supply in ensuing years. All through the old record book there are motions about who shall supply the wood and for how much. A cord of wood ready for the fire cost just a little over a dollar in those days.

The first principal of the Academy was a real character. Every morning before school he would go down the hill behind the church to a spring, sit on a rock, take his shoes and stockings off and bathe his feet. And before going to bed he would run around the church barefoot in the snow and then sleep soundly through the night.

The first winter was a hard one and, to make matters worse, the chimneys smoked at both ends. Mr. Williams coped with this as best he could but one day he called out in exasperation, "Attention! Let us pray." Prayers in those days were not noted for their brevity and Mr. Williams probably told the Lord in great detail about what he thought of wood, stoves and smoking chimneys, adding the demand that the smoke be taken away. "It went," he remarked later.

From the beginning it was apparent to the Proprietors that the Academy would not be limited to Woodstock students. Accordingly, as early as 1802 there is this entry in the record book: "The Proprietors considering that the benefits which may result to their institution will extend not only within their own neighborhood but also to the country around. And that

the advice and assistance of many gentlemen in the adjacent towns and societies may be useful, whereupon it is voted that the proprietors will elect from time to time such persons not now belonging to the Proprietors as Honorary Trustees as they shall see proper."

They were wise in their foresight for the Academy was attended by students from all the surrounding country and in due time it became necessary to have a boarding house for those who could not travel back and forth each day. Elmwood Hall was erected under private ownership in 1844 and was for half a century the boarding house for teachers and students during the school months and a hotel for vacationers in summer.

In Clarence Bowen's History of Woodstock he quotes a charming letter of reminiscences about Woodstock from Edna Dean Proctor who was teacher of art and music in 1848 and who later became famous for her writings. A copy of her poem on Abraham Lincoln in her own handwriting was placed in his tomb. Of the Academy and Elmwood Hall she says: (When she arrived here from New Hampshire with her sister at the age of eighteen) "It was autumn, with short cool days, and darkness fell as we reached Putnam and took the waiting stage for the drive of five miles to Woodstock. We could see nothing beyond the stage and were glad when we reached the Boarding House with its lights and bustle and ready supper. It was presided over by Mr. and Mrs. Sabin, who made it a comfortable, pleasant home for the teachers and pupils from a distance. How eager we were the next morning to look out and see the landscape and how new and strange after the peaks and hills of New Hampshire seemed the broad valley and level horizon! Breakfast over some of the trustees came to see the new teacher and I have never since felt so important as I did that morning in receiving them. I was impressed then and always by the respect with which everyone spoke of the Academy—it seemed to be the center of interest of the Town."

For many years the Academy limped along, tripping on its shoe string. Money was an ever-present problem and as early as the first year or two the proprietors were voting to try to collect on arrears in payments of shares and tuition. In the

year 1806 they found that for the preceding year the amount of tuition bills (deducting the credit for absence) was $2,064.67 and that for instructors, wood and other necessary expenditures they needed to pay out $2,086.44, leaving them $21.77 in the red.

This itemized list of quarterly tuition charges will give some idea of the cost of education in those days: The learned languages and higher branches of mathematics, $4; Geography, composition and oratory in addition to the lower branches, $3.50; Reading, writing, common arithmetic and English Grammar, $3; Reading and writing only, $2; Spelling and reading only, $1.50.

Tuition was paid at the expiration of the term, not in advance, and students were expected to help with wood and the ringing of the bell.

Girls attended from the beginning and for a while they were taught separately upstairs while the boys were taught downstairs.

Notifications of meetings were posted on the town's public sign post or on the sign post at the Academy. As time went by these notices more and more frequently contained warnings that the business of the meetings would be to consider the question of selling or renting the building. There was a period when the building was not used for school but for the most part the Academy managed to keep going by one means or another. In 1804, for instance, the proprietors voted to appeal to the State for permission to raise $15,000 by lottery to make a permanent fund for paying instructors. These old records of meetings never tell the outcome of the story and it is necessary to guess whether or not the lottery was ever held.

The last pages of the book are filled with accounts of sales of shares which were all eventually bought up by Henry C. Bowen who transferred some to Edward Bowen. It ends with this sad notation date 1844: That since they had become sole proprietors it was thought expedient to dispense with a committee to transact the affairs of the institution.

But it was no less unthinkable to the people of Woodstock one hundred years ago than it would be today that the town should be without the Academy. Consequently when Henry C.

Bowen, the country boy who made good in the city, reached into his well-filled pockets and drew out five thousand dollars nearly everyone in town and many from out of town hurried to subscribe another five thousand to match it.

With this money an endowment fund was started which has been added to and guarded through the years and which by its existence sets the Academy apart as a private school. Today the assets, including the land and building, amount to almost $250,000.

Again a few years later Henry C. Bowen pulled from his pockets another five thousand dollars which he gave toward a new building. Scores of sacrificial gifts made up the $25,000 which the building, dedicated in 1873, cost. The old building was moved down the street to the south end of the Hill and is now owned by the Furmans.

With everyone giving a little and no one bearing too heavy a burden of the expense, the pride and interest in the new building must have been very strong. We laugh at it now as people do at old pictures in family albums but when the time comes for it to be replaced by a more adequate structure (as it most surely will) we will regret its loss. It is like a loved maiden aunt who never was considered pretty but who through the years has become beautiful because of dignity and unselfish devotion to nieces and nephews.

In 1913 the trustees determined to give free tuition to students living in Woodstock, the town agreed to help financially, and in 1914 the Academy became the public high school. Interest from endowments which amounts to about $5,000 a year is used as far as it will go and the rest of the expense is met by the town.

The advantages of the arrangement are obvious for there is no longer the continual uncertainty about ability to keep the school running, all children of the town are assured secondary education and the state provides such additional departments as agriculture, home economics and industrial arts.

The affairs of the school from the beginning to this day have always been administered by a board of trustees. The board today consists of 19 members, some alumni and some

Trustees-at-large. They attend to all matters having to do with teachers, tuitions, buildings, grounds and policy.

The Academy was until not long ago purely academic and has remained primarily so. But with the changing times changes in curriculum have come. When tuition was made free to everyone it became apparent that not all students would go on to college and that therefore those who ended their schooling with graduation would need preparation for the practical world into which they would go. Like all new ideas this went down hard with some at first but eventually a home economics course was instituted, later a course in agriculture, and recently an industrial arts department.

During the century and a half of struggle the Academy has sent out from her old fashioned halls countless students and teachers who have made names for themselves in the world and many who have remained in Woodstock to become its good citizens and trusted Town Fathers.

To wonder about the hidden surprises within the children of a little friendly town; to sit in church on Children's Day and watch with overflowing heart the shy, uncertain gropings of the tender tots piping their little pieces; to see on Graduation Day the bland assurance of teenagers so full of the knowledge of their own unlimited strength; and to wonder which will become President (for some of the nation's millions must) and which the emancipator and which the prophet or artist, or which the gentle quiet workers in the unseeen corners—this is the pleasure of the middle years whose passing is marked by the sweet hourly tolling of the Academy bell.

The Swedish Colony

TWO hundred years after the first white settlers came to Woodstock the second settlers came, this time from Sweden. They were in every way as stalwart and courageous as the first group had been. They did not have the Indians to cope with but they had the barrier of language and the problems of minorities. The first settlers had the rich virgin soil to help them but the Swedish people could afford only the overworked, discarded farms of the established townspeople. In a little over eighty years they have turned the run-down farms into prosperous dairies and have established themselves as valuable and respected citizens of the community. Their numbers have grown so that now Woodstock's is the largest Swedish colony in this part of the country.

Had they been the first to arrive here they might well have called this New Smaland rather than New England for Connecticut is very much like the fatherland they left. They came from Smaland, a province of Sweden which has the same rolling hills and rocky fields as Connecticut. It used to be said of Smaland people that you could put them on a rock and they could make a living. The Smalanders must have felt very much at home here from the first, especially when they were put to work clearing the rocks from the fields and pastures.

Their story goes back to 1871. At that time there was a swamp along the road north of Woodstock Hill which had been dammed for use as a cranberry bog. Dr. George Bowen who was cultivating cranberries, was in need of hands. Farm labor was scarce in Woodstock so he went to Castle Garden, the immigration station in New York to try to find foreigners to help. There he met Charles Anderson, a Swede who had just arrived.

Charles Anderson was just his man, for Sweden is great

cranberry country. He turned out to be such an excellent worker that Dr. Bowen arranged for him to write to some of his neighbors in Sweden and tell them that there were good jobs on the Woodstock farms. Wages were low and families were large in Sweden. When several replied that they would come Dr. Bowen and Henry C. Bowen sent transportation and they arrived in 1872. The meeting at the boat was a very moving one. Charles Anderson, speaking through an interpreter, thanked Dr. Bowen for his goodness and then with great emotion said: "All these friends I left in Sweden a year ago without any thought of ever seeing them again, and now they are all here."

Among the first party was Jonas M. Johnson, the only one to remain on in Woodstock. He became their big chief and advisor for all the others who came later. Two of his sons, Henry T. and Bert J. Johnson still live in Woodstock.

He and the others who had come with them had to work four months to pay their passage.

In 1873 another party of twenty-three arrived in Woodstock, some of them the sweethearts of the first group. More continued to come and more sweethearts were sent for until in 1906 there were about three hundred Swedes in Woodstock and surrounding towns.

They were young greenhorns with much to learn of the ways and language of the Yankees. Sometimes there were misunderstanding because the Swedes misinterpreted remarks of the Yankees. But for the most part relations were amicable. The young people worked hard and learned quickly.: They saved every cent they could so that they could buy land of their own. What is now known as New Sweden was then made up of tumble down farms and these the Swedes bought and built up until now they are neat and productive.

They could not have accomplished what they did without the help of their wonderful wives. Nowadays women are not often seen working in the fields but those young Swedish girls were strong and energetic and they worked side by side with their husbands at haying time and harvest time. Besides this

they tended the home gardens, helped with the milking, did all the housework for their large families, gathered berries to can or market, went out to work in the homes of the Yankees and kept their families and houses spotlessly clean. They were and are, excellent cooks and they have always loved to entertain their friends and relatives with lavish hospitality. You cannot enter their homes without being plied with the ever-present cup of coffee and the unsurpassed Swedish cakes.
formal, conservative organization headed by bishops and arch-
and over again, and sixth graders said the lights looked like

For many years they had no definite place for holding church services and sometimes went to neighboring towns for this satisfaction. One young man used to travel habitually to Pomfret and as this became known young ruffians of the town would waylay him as he crossed the bridge in South Woodstock and give him a trouncing. This happened repeatedly until finally the young Swedes decided to take things into their own hands. A number of them gathered on the South Woodstock Common one Sunday and lay around on the grass pretending to be whiling away the day. When the ruffians started their rough work the young Swedes mobbed them, and gave them such a beating and soaking in the brook that they never bothered the church-goer again. After that there was never any trouble.

In Sweden the state religion or church is the Lutheran, a formal but lukewarm organization headed by bishops and archbishops. Smaland was the starting place of the great revivals and the religion of many of the Swedish people who came here was the product of the revivals. That fact and their inability to understand the services in the Congregational church prompted them to start services of their own. In time they bought Flynn's old blacksmith shop on the Hill and made it into a church. As the congregation has grown the church has been enlarged and remodeled and now it is always full to the overflowing. It is the center of all the social and religious life of the Swedish community and has embraced others as well. Once a month the sermon is in Swedish, for there are still many in town who are more at home with their mother tongue.

All Our Pomp of Yesterday

THERE is some spell by which Woodstock binds her sons and adopted sons to her. This has been demonstrated so frequently that it has become a commonplace. The most notable example is Henry C. Bowen.

When he was a young man an opportunity came to his family to send a son to New York to seek his fortune. His brother was chosen to go but when the time arrived he was not on hand, so off Henry went in his place, with the usual fatherly admonitions and blessings. He did not let any grass grow under his feet in the big city and before long he had made his fortune in the firm of a silk merchant and married the boss' daughter. He used to bring her back to Woodstock for the summers and almost every year she presented him with a child until they had eleven children.

The small frame house facing the Hill common where they stayed, soon was bursting at the seams. So Henry Bowen tore it down and built a large, ecclesiastic-gothic mansion with pointed arches, latticed windows and fancy chimneys. His favorite color was pink and pink he painted it with wine-red roof and trim. And pink it remains to this day so that it is known far and wide as the Pink House, though he named it Roseland. On the foundations of the old frame house he planted a formal garden with a box-edged maze of walks. This and the house he surrounded with fine trees and spacious lawns.

Artists come and stand at their easels trying to capture the fairybook quality of the house and go away discouraged, having found that it is actually very solid.

The place is reminiscent of a time in our history when life

was substantial and people lived well from sheer overabundance of vitality and the good things of life.

The story which goes with the house bears this out for it was the scene of many wonderful celebrations.

Having built his house and planted six hundred trees on the common, Henry C. Bowen decided that it would be nice for the town to have a park. There was a pond down in the valley to the east of the Hill and this he proposed to turn into a lake. By then he had become publisher of The Independent, a famed weekly newspaper of the time, of which Henry Ward Beecher and other noted men were editors in turn. Advertising space in his paper was the pay which he gave men of the town for their work. With small carts they carried and dumped 900,000 loads of sand along the shores of the pond. It was his plan to extend the sandy shore all around the pond so that there might be a driveway encircling it but he had to content himself with only the western half. This he laid out as a park with a boathouse, bathing beach and a stand of benches which seated 500.

As editor of the famous Independent Henry C. Bowen found himself involved in politics and of necessity making trips to Washington to hobnob with Senators and Presidents. On one of these trips it occurred to him that it would be a fine thing if Grant should make a trip to Connecticut and include Woodstock in his tour on the 4th of July. This was arranged and President Grant did come. He stayed overnight at Roseland and made a ten-strike with his first pitched ball in the bowling alleys which still stand in the barn.

Woodstock had been accustomed to tremendous political rallies but to have a President was something quite new and Grant's visit was followed by those of Presidents Hayes, Harrison and McKinley. Other notables of the day came also, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Julia Ward Howe, author of The Battle Hymn of the Republic, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose ancestors had helped to settle Woodstock.

Stories of those full-blooded Fourth of July celebrations were printed in papers all over the land and are still being told

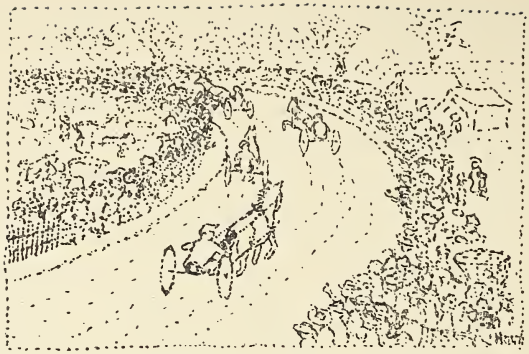
by people who remember them. And well they might be, for nothing like them has ever been seen in this entire area before or since.

The noted guests arrived on the 3rd of July and were brought by carriage from Putnam with much fanfare. Young daughters had been moved from their rooms and their beds made ready for christening by famous names. The house had been prepared for a tremendous reception with as many as 500 invited. Carriages were crowded to hitching posts all along the common. Chicken salad brought by caterers all the way from New York and strawberries for shortcake, grown on Woodstock farms, were served to the hordes of guests. A huge punch bowl which still stands in the high-ceilinged dining room was kept filled all day long with iced lemonade. Henry C. Bowen was a strict teetotaler but his son, a young man of the world, would slip the guest of honor a stimulant if he felt he needed it.

At night the place was a fairyland with Japanese lanterns strung everywhere.

The next day the whole town and people from miles around gathered at Roseland Park. The crowds in the semicircle grandstand facing the lake cheered the rolling rhetoric and sentimental poems of those unselfconscious times. The day of speeches and picnic lunches ended with fireworks lighting up the sky and lake.

Those were happy times in Woodstock, full of confidence in the present and bright hopes for the future. The celebrations were carried on for twenty years until 1896 when Henry C. Bowen died. Then they died too and there was no one after him who had the particular qualities necessary to bring such things to pass.



WOODSTOCK FAIR-1903

Fair With Rising Excitement

IN 1889 small boys and girls, disturbed on an early September morning by the clatter of cattle passing their windows on the way to the Fair, would stir in their feather quilts and waken to the same turmoil in their tummies with which they had gone to sleep. While the big breakfast was cooking on the crackling kitchen range and the horses were hitched to the wagon they scurried and fretted over the lambs and the pigs and the calves, the vegetables, fancy work, cakes and home canned fruits. One minute they were filled with confidence that blue ribbons would be theirs and the next minute there would be the down-elevator feeling that no, perhaps there would not even be a red ribbon.

In 1949 cars nosed cautiously out of driveways and pulled back again to let the stream of cars whish past until at last there was a hole into which they could slip if they were quick. And small boys and girls started off to the Fair with the same

Fair-morning feeling and the same comings and goings of hope for their animals and hand work entered so confidently the day before. For that is the Woodstock Fair—the year's work coming to an exclamation point after the patient and continuous care or the sudden inspiration with flowers, paper or paints. The side shows, the merry-go-round, the vaudeville and the popsicles are just the good thick icing on the home made cake. The children know it and the grown-ups know it too.

That's what the Fair started out to be way back in 1828 when the fancy work was shown in the Academy and the cattle exhibition was where the Gymnasium now stands. That's what it was when the Baptist Church in South Woodstock was the setting and that's what it has always been since the Fair Grounds were bought.

Though this was called the 89th Fair the roots go back a hundred and forty years to the time in 1809 when Pomfret, Woodstock and Brooklyn formed the first Agricultural Society in Connecticut. Fairs were held alternately in Woodstock and in Pomfret at the site of Dr. Overlock's place. The Pomfret branch was moved to Brooklyn and established there in 1852. That makes it the oldest in the country and Woodstock's, which was established soon after, is a close runner-up.

The Fairs used to be held in the middle of the month and were rained out year after year. Recently since the date has been moved to Labor Day it has usually been fair for the Fair, cross your fingers.

The balloon man who is always stationed in front of the main hall has been coming for 51 years and has watched three generations mill past him up the steps.

Kids whose grandfathers grumble that a horse can do lots of things a tractor can't, guide tractors through the mazes as though they were toys.

Boys and girls parade their sheep and show proudly how they have trained them to lead.

The old fiddler, Mr. Powers, ninety come January, and this year's mascot, had the time of his life meeting celebrities like Lynne Carver and Jane Moultrie at the Vernon Stiles Inn and fiddling to Mr. Polk's accompaniment on the grand piano. A

seventy-five-but-willing widow consented to be his accompanist and might even consent to be more than that if pressed.

As usual several children got lost and this year one husband got lost, too—accidentally, that is.

One man spent a whole day at the wheel where the blankets were prizes, plunking down dimes until he got one. It cost $6.15 but he figured it was worth it. Lots of people have had a hankering to do the same thing.

A woman on the Ferris wheel had her arms wound around her husband's neck in a death grip till they let her off, and it wasn't affection she was displaying. If you're like me and can't ride backwards in a train, or go down in an elevator or swing on a swing without turning sea-green you'll know how she felt. Everybody had always said how nice the view was up there especially at night with the pretty lights and all. I went up but all I remember is the sins of my past fiashing before my glazed eyes. It's like drowning only in reverse. I felt like the baby in the basket the stork is bringing only the stork wasn't there. If the man hadn't listened to my not-exactly quiet suggestion that he let me off there would have been headlines in all the papers reading, "Woman Leaps From Ferris Wheel To Gory Death."

As you wandered around the Fair Grounds you'd hear things like, "Say, people are real people here," or "The place is getting too big," or "Gosh, there's nothing here at all," or "Boy, this is the place." The show people of the vaudeville were impressed with the lunch-sharings and chaps who had been to the Kingston, Rhode Island Fair and the Spencer Fair said ours was away out ahead.

As the last salvo of rockets lighted up the sky, and the flag and one resounding boom put the final punctuataion mark on three days of fun a small boy was heard to say, "Well, that's the end of the Grand Old Fair."

Acknowledgment

The History of Woodstock, by Clarence W. Bowen
Little Old Mills, by Marion Nicholl Rawson
John Goffe's Mill, by George Woodbury
A Modern History of Windham County, by Allen B. Lincoln
History of Windham County, by Ellen Douglas Larned
History of Windham County, Connecticut, by Richard M. Bayles

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THE AUTHOR.

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